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BUSINESS ETHICS: A STUDY OF CHRISTIAN VOCATION
AND THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

A Dissertation
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the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
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Doctor of Religion

by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Today's church finds itself in a struggle to authenticate its existence. On the one hand, church membership roles are diminishing following the "fattening-up" process of the 1950's. On the other hand, serious critics, both inside and outside the church are taking increasingly numerous "pot shots" at the institutional church. No longer can the church consider itself "safe", as was the case in the booming membership days of post World War II. This dilemma, at first despairing, is actually a most hopeful sign. It calls the church to justify its existence, not by transitory standards but by the only substantial standards there are, the standards and commands of its Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I. THE PROBLEM

Amidst this struggle for authenticity, serious churchmen have to encounter the many questions being put to them by the church's critics. One of the most important questions being asked is: In what unique and substantial way does the Christian faith influence and speak to contemporary, occupational man in an age of increasing industrial and technological sophistication? In short, can the

Christian faith relate to one's total life style, specifically that segment of one's life that is occupational?

In order to answer these questions some very searching work needs to be done in the occupational field of business. Christian businessmen are continually confronted with morally problematic issues in their daily work and unless the Christian faith can address itself to this area it will increasingly lose touch with the lives of countless men. More specifically, in the field of marketing-retailing, the problem of "Planned Obsolescence,"¹ as a focal point for many ethical issues, calls for clarification and analysis.

The church must address itself with theological clarity to these occupational problems or else lose its inherent uniqueness and calling. It is this writers conviction that the church has not dealt substantially with these issues, and because of that we find Christians who view their occupations as being self-sufficient enough to relegate their faith to the margins of personal and emotional life, denying faith its centrality.

The problem then is two-fold. What does the church have to say to the business community in the light of

¹"Planned Obsolescence" will be defined in Chapter IV.

ethical issues; and what resources will it draw upon in addressing such issues?

II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Purpose. The purpose of this paper could be stated as four goals.

(1) I shall attempt to convey the belief that any responsible approach to business ethics must be grounded in our Biblical tradition and our theological heritage. By doing this, a doctrine of vocation and a theology of the church will be instrumental in approaching and resolving ethical dilemmas in business.

(2) By dealing with complex ethical dilemmas, I shall seek to convey a sympathetic understanding of businessmen whom the church often fails to understand. That often the Christian businessman feels the church has nothing substantial to say to him in his daily industry can in part be explained by clergymen who either condescendingly preach simplistic moralisms or forget the issue altogether as it lies "outside the church's realm". By developing a case study on "Planned Obsolescence", an attempt is made to focus our concern on some of the problematic features which confront men in the marketing-retailing segment of our economy.

(3) I shall also attempt to inform the Christian

layman as to the centrality and depth of the Christian faith in light of one's occupational task. If one assumes a Christian stance, then the faith informs one's whole "life style".

(4) Lastly, I shall suggest some concrete avenues toward ministry to businessmen in local parish situations.

Scope. This type of project necessitated a narrowing of subject matter in the field of business ethics. I have chosen the field of marketing-retailing as a focal point due to my familiarity with it through previous educational exposure and field experience. By dealing with "planned obsolescence" as a core dilemma in marketing-retailing, I hope to avoid unnecessary generalities which have been the trademark of many previous studies. In dealing with a specific dilemma which has broad implications, the Christian tradition's historical heritage and theology can therefore be applied to a more limited field providing greater clarity and applicability.

III. METHOD OF STUDY

It is my judgment that the methodology of this research is as significant as the material that is contained in the body of the study. Studies in business ethics are numerous, and many of them have contributed a great deal. By and large, however, the approach most writers

take is solely one of problem solving. Problem solving is an essential procedure in any study of business ethics, but when it is reduced to a status of isolated decision making, void of a Biblical and theological reference point, then it fails in its theological task. Many books have been written attempting to answer problematic moral issues in business, but they fail in not articulating a theological and doctrinal stance that would apply to one's whole calling i.e., one's vocation. Religion, in the context of these studies, is thought of as providing a personal ethic for conduct in specific instances. This kind of approach to Christian business ethics fails to take seriously the Biblical, historical, and theological norms of Christian vocation and merely becomes a scheme which embraces, defines and informs personal morality, without determining norms for one's whole life. Religion, in this sense, is an index of what is right and wrong in specific isolated issues. This, of course, grossly oversimplifies the reality of moral conflict by narrowing and isolating ethical decision making to specific instances.

In making this statement we are saying that the Christian doctrine of vocation informs man's whole existence and not just his private life or his public professional life. The task of business ethics cannot be viewed as an isolated fragmented discipline, rather, it calls for the "whole" man who perceives ethically problematic areas from

the vantage point of a Christian persuasion which informs his total life.

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Vocation. The word "vocation" has increasingly been secularized to the point that today it has little or any of its original Biblical meaning. In order to distinguish the Biblical meaning of "vocation" from its popular conception, (which is usually any form of work or occupation) I shall, in general, use as the Biblical concept of "vocation" the term "Christian Vocation". However, in the Old Testament, New Testament, and Church History sections of Chapter II, I will use "vocation" to imply God's calling. When we speak of the Biblical meaning of vocation in the modern period, we will refer to it as "Christian Vocation."

Calling. The word "calling" in Biblical usage is almost synonymous with "vocation", or in this case "Christian Vocation." Therefore in this study "calling" and "Christian Vocation" will be regarded as the same.

Work. The word "work", which in popular thought is the usual meaning of "vocation", will be thought of here as the physical, economic or occupational aspect of life. In other words, "work" will mean the same thing as "job". The man who has a "calling" or a "Christian Vocation" will see his "work" as the channel through which he both

accomplishes economic gain through physical labor and enables the furtherance of the Gospel and the purposes of God.

Both terms, "work" and "Christian Vocation" will be dealt with separately and in relationship to each other in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

A BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL VIEW OF WORK AND VOCATION

The term "vocation" has been corrupted until it means little more than the profession or occupation that an individual adopts as a life work. Together with this loss of the meaning of vocation there has at the same time been a narrowing of the term, "call of God." For most people, either in or outside the church, a "call of God" has become a call to the professional ministry. Most often this means that one is "leaving the world" in order to prepare for Christian service as either a missionary or an ordained clergyman. Such a narrowing of the ranks of the "called" and a broadening of what is meant by "vocation" in today's popular thought, rejects the whole central idea of divine calling and vocation which is found in both the Old and New Testaments and in church history, especially in the first century and Reformation thought.

In terms of the church, the caricature of Christian vocation and calling that now exists can only minimize the intent of the priesthood of all believers and negate any real relationship between Christianity and work.

...It results in the church's being no longer a chosen people, a fellowship under covenant with God--but instead an institution made up of clergymen with which

laymen may communicate.¹

Small wonder that the task of ethics in business seems incongruous and out of style to present business practices and to the men involved.

Before any study of ethical dilemmas in business can be conducted, the prior task of determining what is meant by vocation, work and calling for the Christian faith must be undertaken. This task is essential and failure to undertake it is a partial explanation for the demise of Christian business ethics today.

Only by examining our Biblical tradition and historical heritage can we regain the importance of vocation and call for modern man and at the same time have an accurate understanding of what Christian vocation and calling should mean for us today. The Biblical tradition and historical heritage of work and vocation will be the subject of this chapter. I shall first discuss the Biblical view of vocation and work, specifying both an Old Testament and a New Testament viewpoint, and an overview of the whole Bible. Secondly, I shall survey briefly the history of the doctrine of vocation and work in Christian thought. Because Martin Luther and the Reformation were most important in this history, I shall focus upon that point in the church's

¹John Oliver Nelson, "Introduction," in his Work and Vocation, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 24.

history.

I. BIBLICAL VIEW

It is important to note here that the Bible does not furnish a clear-cut doctrine of work and vocation that can be easily applied to modern occupations with immediate beneficial results. In other words, we cannot search the Scriptures for a detailed account of what is appropriate and what is not appropriate work. The Bible deals with the topic, but in greater breadth.

The Bible speaks a great deal about work, and in that sense it is "...a book by workers, about workers, for workers..."² We today find it difficult and even a bit absurd to discern God's hand at work within the daily round, but the men of the Bible seem to find everywhere evidence of God's immediate activity. For these men, "...the workaday world is the place where both God and men are active, sometimes at cross purposes and sometimes in cooperation."³

In both testaments, each work situation confronted the worker with strategic opportunities for good or ill, while at the same time work was viewed as a universal element in human experience. Therefore the significance of

²Paul S. Minear, "Work and Vocation in Scripture," in Ibid, p. 33.

³Ibid.

any job stemmed from its bearing upon "God's overarching purposes, Israel's enduring covenants, man's perennial rebellions, and his ultimate destiny."⁴

The Bible does not treat the term work in the familiar categories of analysis, via sociology or economics. Therefore, we cannot expect to find in the Bible specifications for improving particular working situations which are of a problematic nature. Rather, we should listen to what the Bible has to say about work and its universal meaning. Let us not force the Bible to speak directly to all our occupational problems, but rather let us listen to the context in which the Bible allows us to set such problems.

The Old Testament

It is important to point out at first that throughout the Bible it is the person who works to whom most attention is given, rather than the form or conditions of his work. In light of this, the meaning of work in the Bible "...is contingent upon the laborer's purpose in life; the validity of the work rests first of all upon the validity of that purpose."⁵ In the Old Testament the purpose of the God of Israel is the validating factor in any work. Yet even here, the purpose of the worker is addressed and not the work itself. The approach seems at first to deflate

⁴Ibid., p. 39.

⁵Ibid., p. 40.

the value of what a worker is doing. The Bible does not place a premium on the work of the carpenter as better than that of the garbage collector. Yet by placing the accent on the person who labors, the Bible gives to every kind of work a genuine significance. An illustration of this in the Old Testament are the Psalmist's words:

Unless the Lord builds the house,
Those who build it labor in vain,
Unless the Lord watches over the city,
The watchman stays awake in vain.
Ps. 127:1 (RSV)

In this passage the Psalmist does not elaborate a general doctrine of work per se. He does not draw up a list of preferred occupations which God approves, rather he focuses attention upon the persons who work. Along with many other Old Testament writers, he emphasizes the agent of work more than the act of work, the motivation of the laborer more than the mode of his labor.⁶

We also notice that the Psalmist addresses the worker in the midst of his task and not before it began or after it was completed. Here and in other places in the Old Testament the call for decision making takes place amidst the options open to the worker in the quality and motivation of his present job and not in deciding upon the various options of work.⁷

⁶Ibid., pp. 40-41.

⁷Ibid., p. 41.

Two inferences can be drawn from this passage. First of all, "...the Psalmist's attitude refuses to endorse the various dignities which society always assigns to preferred trades and the corresponding indignities which fall upon other trades."⁸ By implication, the Bible encourages a great leveling of occupations, since the dignity of the worker does not depend on the prestige accorded to his profession. Secondly, "...this leveling of occupational walls is accompanied by an elevation of the potential significance of all jobs and occupations."⁹ From the worker's standpoint every field or shop may become the place where he is visited by God, and where ultimate matters are at stake. When this happens, the workbench becomes the scene of decisions on the part of the worker in which the highest freedom and the highest responsibility are joined.

It is in the tension which exists between freedom and responsibility that the worker finds himself in the Old Testament. This tension of course is frustrating and in that sense he labors under great pressure.

The Book of Genesis is entirely realistic about the fact that man's life is lived and his work is done under frustrating conditions, and that he never by an effort in this world comes to his heart's desire. There is a curse over all his earthly life; and if he looks for a

⁸Ibid., p. 42.

⁹Ibid.

perfection or fulfillment in this world he will find only disillusionment.¹⁰

In the Psalm we have been studying, we note the emphasis placed on God as the builder. Man is the vessel through which God acts out his central purposes. Through sin, man's dominion over all the creatures has been curtailed, and yet God seeks to restore man. Until man's free activities bring about God's purposes, man's labor will remain in disillusionment and defeat. Throughout all of this, God is at work and His work touches the work of man at many points. Since God is the master builder, the laborer must forever be inquiring as to whether or not God is at work in his labor. The fear of God is enhanced by man's inability to know with certainty which "houses" God may be building. In other words, the laborer wonders if his labor is a vessel through which God is working. All of this makes it clear that:

...the decisive axis in Biblical attitudes toward work is the link between man's labor and the whole work of God, the Creator and Redeemer. Work derives its importance from the activity therein of both divine and human workers, with God taking the initiative and man giving his response.¹¹

We must now ask how it is that a man may know what God is doing, so that he may orient his labor accordingly.

¹⁰Alexander Miller, Christian Faith and My Job (New York: Association Press, 1946), p. 36.

¹¹Minear, op. cit., p. 45.

This knowledge, of course, can only be ascertained through the channels by which God deals with his men. In other words, man seeks to know what his vocation is.

The most distinctive aspect of the Old Testament view of vocation is that:

...the sole origin of genuine vocation is the God of Israel. He determines whom He calls and for what end He summons them. He has a purpose even for those who are unaware of it, but the recognition of what one's vocation is demands self disclosure on God's part and voluntary obedience on mans.¹²

This leads us to a further dimension of the Old Testament's view of vocation and work. God discloses His purposes in the calling of a community destined to be His own people. God's covenant with these people gives to them a corporate vocation that sets them apart.¹³ Israel, therefore, became God's people and servants, summoned to show forth God's glory and to bring forth justice to all nations.

This establishment of God's covenant with Israel made the corporate vocation the primary basis for each person's vocation. Wherever an individual was given a specific mission, he was in one way or another carrying forward the mission of the whole community.¹⁴

Since God had endowed the community with the highest vocation conceivable, He intended workers in all employments to participate in that far-reaching mission. As we can see, God's covenant and its implied corporate vocation would have

¹²Ibid., p. 47.

¹³Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 48-49.

a tendency to eliminate such tension as would normally exist when the assumption is prevalent that some careers are superior to others. This of course, gave "...to all workers in all trades a genuine equality before God and a genuine importance in the life of the community."¹⁵

Man's vocation is not limited to just his occupational life but rather his vocation "...embraces everything that he is and does."¹⁶ This contribution of the Old Testament's doctrine of vocation is immensely helpful for it broadens the concept of vocation to include one's whole range of capacities, skills and purposes and thereby breaks down the isolation of working time from the remainder of one's life. In terms of contemporary norms, this Old Testament concept undercuts the incessant competition between "secular work" and "sacred worship", between activities that appear to be productive of good and those which appear to be sheer waste. God's covenant with Israel and the resultant corporate vocation included the total gamut of a man's life.

The Old Testament, of course, is filled with stories wherein God summons particular people for specific errands, i.e. Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, the prophets, priests and kings. And yet each leader was at once a servant and a representative of the community. These leaders' "...work

¹⁵Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 50.

had no significance in itself apart from the fulfillment of God's covenant with the entire people."¹⁷ These special vocations then did not diminish the prestige of humbler forms of service.

The New Testament

If work were defined solely in terms of remunerative employment, and if the word vocation refers only to one's occupation in the business world, then we would have to say that the mission of Jesus had virtually nothing to do with work or vocation.

On the other hand, if we are to view work and vocation within its Old Testament context, where God as master builder is at work as Creator and Redeemer through man's work; where man's vocation includes all the areas of his life and not just his working hours; where God is the sole origin of genuine vocation as the God of Israel; then the Christ event has a great deal to say about work and vocation.

Through the Incarnation, Jesus Christ appeared in the world as a common man, as a "worker", and in that act he disclosed to all "workers" the true dimension of their common vocation as the people whom the God of Israel has chosen. This climactic event of God's revelatory activity

¹⁷Ibid., p. 51.

within the history of His chosen people was the sending of the Messiah, who was perfectly faithful to his vocation.

Coming in the form of man, he accomplished his work in the form of a servant. Those to whom he came rejected him, but God used every rejection to accomplish His gracious intention. Through him God created a new world and a new Israel...As living Lord he carried forward his work of providing dependable vocational guidance for his people. In him was disclosed the meaning and purpose of all the earlier covenants...In him... the disciple arrived at whatever understanding of vocation God chose to grant, according to the measures of grace and faith.¹⁸

"To live then in a world where Jesus is Lord is to work in a world where this Lord is aggressively completing his avowed intention."¹⁹ God commissioned Jesus, His servant, to proclaim the good news of God's kingdom, and in this proclamation to relate "...what God is now doing to what He had done and what He is about to do in final judgment and mercy."²⁰

Jesus Christ makes clear the terms of the new covenant with God; the way that leads to life. This "way" permeates and transforms the attitudes and actions of men in the total realm of their existence, including their work hours.²¹ If this "way" is accepted, then men become servants of the Lord, transforming "...every evil day, every situation of work or rest, into an occasion for emancipation

¹⁸Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 61.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., pp. 61-62.

and renewal. This service of reconciliation involves suffering with and for others.²²

Thus even the humblest disciple proclaims the Gospel wherever he is at work, proclaiming it in deed, silence and in his speech. In the Bible the only vocation which is characterized as noble is the vocation which elicits costly humble service. Thus the highest calling is open to the humblest servant. Vocation is not determined by outward manifestations but "...inwardly at the point where God's willing and working are united with man's will and work. (Philippians 2:12-13)."²³

The disciple's vocation is determined outwardly only at the point in his daily affairs where God's call is channeled through the need of the neighbor. To love God and to love your neighbor become one command and one love. Therefore one works in order to love, although this love needs to be understood as a power that begins and ends in God.²⁴

In the New Testament, there is a certain freedom in response to God's call. The compulsive nature of the law in the Old Testament is replaced in the New Testament by responsible freedom in Jesus Christ. This is a freedom in

²²Ibid., p. 62.

²³Ibid., p. 63.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 63-64.

obedience. It frees one inwardly to accept himself as he is; it frees one outwardly to love his enemy; and it frees one from all anxieties, enabling him to seek first the Kingdom of God.²⁵

The Lord who has freed him now guides his decisions in the use of his freedom, and opens the way through them to a more perfect freedom. This freedom is meant to pervade every mundane task, all the various labors of all Christians...The place in which a person is called is the place for realizing this freedom.²⁶

Another dimension to a New Testament understanding of work and vocation has to do with the all important contemporary norms of success and failure. If one is a "success" in his work then moderns judge him to be in the "right" job. However, this criteria for "success" is quite different from the New Testament understanding. Based on contemporary values, Jesus was not very successful, for the cross indicates the failure of his mission. In faith, however, we see this apparent failure as a tremendous victory. Therefore, the believer is taught not to view the success of his vocation merely by reference to its immediate tangible results. In fact, ambition for earthly success is a source of the most subtle form of bondage. In Christ we are freed from that bondage. It is in this freedom that the believer feels emancipation from earthly standards and measurements. It is an emancipation which even allows one

²⁵Ibid., pp. 64-65.

²⁶Ibid., p. 65.

to remain a slave to human masters and serve them in the Lord whether they are brutal or kind. (I Corinthians 7:20-24).²⁷

The Christian is so free from bondage to earthly results that he is ready to trust God's ultimate judgment concerning success or failure...The validity of the vocation as a whole, then, depends on the faithfulness of God. That faithfulness has already been proved in the victory won by Christ over every adversary. At the return of Christ this proof will be published to all the world, and with it the "success" of the Church's vocation.²⁸

In the New Testament, when Christ calls one at his job, the worker must be ready to leave everything behind in order to follow. This means that one might have to lose all things in order to be found in Christ. (Philippians 3: 8-11). In Christ one also sees terminated all the distinctions commonly made of honor and status among industrial and professional groups. (Colossians 3:11). This is perhaps why the New Testament gives so very little advice on the selection of a particular type of work. This lack of detailing what is acceptable and what is not as work, upsets many people who want from the New Testament a clear and concise listing. What the Bible does do, and in doing it undoubtedly disturbs those same people, is to draw the line between the right and wrong motives in choosing any occupation and this distinction is too clear to give anyone

²⁷Ibid., pp. 68-69.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 69-70.

the comfort of self righteousness.

The Gospel of the Jewish carpenter deflated the false superiorities of aristocratic careers by offering the highest vocation to workers in all trades, however menial.²⁹

This concept of vocation precipitates a revolution in attitudes toward all occupations. It does not require an immediate shift into another job, but rather demands that the motives of the worker be in harmony with the motives intrinsic in Christian vocation. In light of this, one's attitudes to his job and toward the people with which he works are transformed.³⁰

This New Testament concept of vocation is the way of the cross and as such it poses tremendous difficulties for the individual worker. The difficulty lies in the fact that Christian vocation is radically opposed to the world's notion of vocation. The origin of Christian vocation is "...God's purpose in Christ to redeem everything that man does from hopelessness..."³¹ Christian vocation is "...God's way of restoring integrity to man's fragmented and tortured existence, of restoring peace to an alienated society."³² The clash between Christian vocation and other vocations becomes most acute in man at his place of employment. One's place of work becomes the arena for the demon-

²⁹Ibid., p. 77.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., p. 80.

³²Ibid.

stration of Christ's victory.

The law of love under which he lives makes him more aware than others of the ruthless competition that masks itself in "service"...But when the temptation is greatest, there he listens anew for vocational guidance from his Lord. He will hear the gospel again as a proclamation of judgment and will recognize in this judgment the door to forgiveness and freedom.³³

Conclusion

From this brief survey of the essentials of Old and New Testament thought concerning work and vocation, we can isolate several important factors.

In the Old Testament we saw that emphasis is placed on the worker rather than on the work being done. Closely associated with this is a lack of evidence pointing to any preferred trades. Thus all workers stand before God as equals.

We also discovered that God's work as Creator and Redeemer is accomplished when man's labor and the work of God join together. In that sense, man's work is a vessel through which God is at work.

The God of Israel, as the sole origin of genuine vocation, calls his chosen people and views their vocation corporately. In addition, one's vocation embraces the totality of one's existence, and not just his working hours.

In the New Testament, the major ideas of the Old

³³Ibid., pp. 80-81.

Testament are clearly influential and remain intact. The New Testament adds the life of Jesus Christ and therefore contributes an entirely new dimension to the Biblical understanding of vocation.

The source of the New Testament's understanding of vocation is God's call for men to become His sons. This call has been received but it is yet to be realized fully through the response of the Son. The perfect pattern of vocation becomes clear in the person of Jesus Christ, in whom both divine calling and human response meet. In Him mankind is restored to its authentic vocation. All of man's work is intended to become part of the continuing work of Christ; the laborer's efforts becoming expressions of his new life in Christ. There is one vocation for all, yet each has his own distinctive work to do. When one's work springs from a will that is obedient, that work is redeemed. If one's work fails in this area, then it remains part of the realm of rebellion, a segment of the world that is passing away.

Thus, in the Old Testament, the old Hebrew conviction is that human life gets its meaning in and through a calling and election by the Word of God. In the New Testament, that word is disclosed with new power and wisdom in Jesus Christ, who, at once, represents a promise and an imperative demand for devotion to God and love to fellow

men.

Christian vocation then, instead of merely representing one's occupational life, encompasses all that one is, and so stems from a person's awareness of the central purpose of his life.

II. THE VIEW FROM CHURCH HISTORY

Two main themes emerge from our review of the Biblical teachings on work and vocation. The primary theme is the calling of men by God: the divine choosing of Israel (and then the Christians) to be bound by a covenant with God as people with special obligation; and the calling of each member of that body to a common life of duty and hope. This primary theme is the Biblical understanding of vocation. Subordinate to it, though essentially determined by vocation is the Biblical treatment of work, as the continuing activity of both God and man, which received its significance from the purposes and acts of God.

A review of Church history on this subject is a panorama of how these two themes developed. While they were always present, their relationship was not always clearly indicated, and in some periods restrictions and separations seriously affected the correct Biblical understanding of both.

Pre-Reformation

The fourteen hundred years which roughly separate the apostolic period from the beginnings of the Reformation saw the two themes of work and Christian vocation proceed from a broad Biblical base to a very narrow interpretation back again to a general broadening.

During the period of the early Church Fathers, while the end of the present age was still confidently awaited and while the church was treated as an "alien" in the Roman world, comparatively little attention was paid to the details of the Christian's working life and to the Biblical understanding of work and vocation.

However, with Constantine, who was making Christianity more respectable and safe, there emerged a monastic development calling for Christians to withdraw from the complexities and corruptions of the world and to seek freedom and purity of life in isolation, while looking toward the greater glories of the life to come.³⁴

Monasticism had a most distinctive and influential effect on vocation and work. During the centuries in which it existed:

...the basic doctrine of vocation was kept alive under one name or another, and given special significance for the monastic life, long considered the most intense,

³⁴Robert L. Calhoun, "Work and Vocation In Christian History," in Nelson, op. cit., p. 90.

heroic, exemplary form of Christian living. At the same time...the church's theory and practice with respect to daily work became at once more systematic and more complex than it had ever been in Biblical times.³⁵

The relationship between work and vocation however became very unevenly understood by leaders of Christian thought.

Augustine broadened the concept of Monasticism to include all Christians in all types of work. He felt that work, when it was devoted to the service of truth, justice and peace, displayed the marks of divine ordering and they became instruments of human welfare.

Within one hundred and fifty years after Augustine died in 430 the fabric of Western Roman civilization had crumbled. Nevertheless, Western Monasticism under Benedict of Nursia was becoming a new center for a new civilization.

Benedict's Rule for monastic life (c. 529) followed Basil in rejecting once for all the undisciplined individualism and wild asceticism of the earlier solitaries. Life in organized communities was made the basic pattern of monastic development...simplicity for food, dress, and shelter, and for freedom from the corrupting entanglements of the secular world, was continued and nurtured as a pattern of Christian life.³⁶

At the end of the sixth century Gregory I brought the monastic ideal into the center of Church life. In centering Monasticism within the church Gregory the Great called for all churchmen, clergy and lay officials, to be actively involved. A life of humble service was the only

³⁵Ibid., p. 83.

³⁶Ibid., p. 93.

criterion for evaluating one's call and not the position one held.

After Gregory I, and as medieval society developed, new patterns of inequality and aristocracy became established, corrupting the early temper of monastic leaders. In this period a taste for idleness and spiritual pride prevailed and constructive labor became subordinated to a preference for privileged leisure in quest of a higher order of Christian virtue--"perfection."³⁷

While reform was continually called for, it was not until the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries that change began to take place. In this period the monastic life was continually strengthened, but at the same time developments for new forms of life for laity were strongly called for.

Gregory VII, in tightening Monasticism, sought to "...free the church as completely as possible from control by laymen, even princes and emperors, who must acknowledge their subjection to the clergy in all matters of Christian faith and discipline."³⁸

At the same time lay reform movements, marked by a spirit of protest against too sharp a division between laymen and the hierarchy, sought a renewal of simplicity

³⁷Ibid., p. 96.

³⁸Ibid., p. 97.

and democracy in church life together with demands that the mass be celebrated in the language of the people and that Bible reading be freely permitted to the laity.

However, near the end of the thirteenth century Thomas Aquinas further affirmed that in the hierarchy of work, works of prayer, preaching and the like rank higher than manual works in their contribution to corporate life, though he added that both were necessary. This view represents the fully matured hierarchical thought of the medieval Church.³⁹

The doctrine of vocation up and through the time of Thomas Aquinas, then, was strongly influenced by Monasticism. Although every Christian was indeed called, in the broadest sense, only the monastic life deserved, as an earthly status, to be named a Christian vocation. This was the popularly held opinion throughout the medieval period. Monastic "vocation" and the life of the ordinary Christian grew further apart.

Within fifty years of Aquinas' death, Marsiglio of Padua in Italy, William of Ockham in England and his successor John Wyclif held that whatever spiritual authority a priest or pope might rightly claim is just as properly claimed by any faithful Christian. Wyclif also vigorously

³⁹Ibid., pp. 98-99.

sponsored the work of translating the Vulgate into English, an act which bears witness to his belief that all people should have access to the Scriptures. While these actions did not directly affect the theology of work, they certainly set the stage for further developments in this area.⁴⁰

Daily work and divine vocation, long separated when the double standard of Christian life prevailed, began to converge in the late middle ages and were brought together with great emphasis in Martin Luther's teachings, as well as in teachings of other reformers.

Reformation - Martin Luther

The reformers who preceeded Luther and Luther himself rejected the double standard for Christian living which prevailed throughout the medieval period and in its place declared that every man's work and place in society is for him a divinely ordained vocation. Work then, in the thought of Luther and the other reformers, was intimately associated with one's vocation. For the reformers, the ascetic life (as contrasted to labor) which had been the norm for vocation in the medieval period, was in fact less a vocation than work itself.

In his (Luther's) lectures on the Epistle to the Romans, 1515-1516, we find direct insistence that every station in society imposes its peculiar requirement, which is

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 80-81.

neglected if one instead imitates the legend of some holy life.⁴¹

Work and vocation became very close in Luther's thought, though this is not to say that the range of the Biblical concept of vocation was narrowed down to include work only. This will be seen more clearly as we deal with Luther's thought. What should be said at this point is that "work", for Luther, was being elevated once again as a station in vocation. Luther believed that any sort of serviceable status in society which enables one to serve his neighbors deserves to be regarded as a divinely ordained calling (Beruf, vocatio).⁴²

Let us now deal with Luther's thought more directly and systematically. It is perhaps not too bold to say that for Luther, the doctrine of vocation was as central an issue in his reforming thought as was any doctrine. His doctrines of the sufficient authority of scripture, the common priesthood of believers and the need for drastic reform in the organization and practice of the church were all directly related and influenced by his Biblical understanding of the common man therefore his vocation as a Christian in life. While there are many other core concepts

⁴¹Gustaf Wingren, Luther on Vocation (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), p. viii.

⁴²Calhoun, op. cit., p. 108.

around which one could organize and relate Luther's thought, certainly the doctrine of vocation is as central and primary as any.

Gustaf Wingren summarizes the theological importance of Luther's thought on vocation as follows:

Man in his vocation is in the earthly kingdom hoping for the heavenly kingdom, which comes to him here through the gospel, but which will not be fully revealed in power until after death. Thus he stands between heaven and earth. But he also stands between God and the devil. His vocation is one of the situations in which he chooses sides in the combat between God and Satan.⁴³

Luther's "system" is typically one of contrasts. First of all there is the contrast between Heaven and Earth, then God and the Devil and finally Old Man and New Man. Vocation then, belongs to man before death, where there are two kingdoms, earth and heaven, two contending powers, God and the devil, and two antagonistic components in man, the old man and the new.

Heaven and Earth. Vocation belongs to this world and not to heaven, and it is directed toward one's neighbor and not toward God.

In his vocation one is not reaching up to God, but rather bends oneself down toward the world. When one does that, God's creative work is carried on. God's work of love takes form on earth...⁴⁴

⁴³Wingren, op. cit., p. xi.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 10.

Vocation, and good works, are rejected by Luther as a means to man's salvation and status as a child of God. Rather, good works and vocation exist for earth and one's neighbor, and not for eternity and God. It is our neighbor who needs our good works and not God; faith is what God wants. Faith's realm in heaven and love's realm on earth through one's vocation toward his neighbor, must not be confused.

In his vocation man does works which affect the well-being of others; for so God has made all offices. Through this work in man's offices, God's creative work goes forward, and that creative work is love...Thus love comes from God, flowing down to human beings on earth through all vocations...⁴⁵

On earth, man's vocation is contained in the framework of law, while the gospel is found in the church. Thus both law and gospel press themselves upon man in earthly form. Therefore, for Luther, the "...Christian is crucified by the law in his vocation, under the earthly government; and he arises through the gospel, in the church under the spiritual government."⁴⁶ Through law and gospel the individual is incorporated into Christ; through vocation, into his cross, and through the church, into his resurrection. It is in this sense that for Luther, God's complete work is set into motion through man's vocation.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 27.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 30.

For vocation is not only conducive to the well being of one's neighbor through love, but in addition vocation compels man to look to God and lay hold of His promise through faith. Man is thereby put into right relation both to earth (Love) and to heaven (Faith) through vocation. In both of these situations God is working through man; "...in law and vocation He is working without his Spirit, in love born of faith with his Spirit."⁴⁷

A man is crucified by law through the cross of his vocation, and he is made alive and raised through faith in the gospel. As the works of one's vocation are directed in this world, faith stretches forward to life after death, away from the present.

Vocation, then, is earthly, in fact just as shockingly earthly as was the humanity of Christ. God, as He did in Christ, conceals His work of love to men in cross-marked vocations; which are offensively ordinary tasks. This is the condition of man before resurrection, but following the eschatological consummation, the earthly realm and the power of the law are past, "...for Christ's heavenly kingdom, which formerly existed only in the form of the gospel, has now come in power."⁴⁸

God and the Devil. As we saw in the previous

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 46.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 249.

section, the spiritual and the earthly governments constitute two kingdoms, but both of these are God's. They are not in opposition to one another, but, side by side, both contend against the devil, one guided by the gospel, and the other by the law.

Man is created by God and has received God's Word, which is both promise of life in heaven (the gospel) and command concerning life on earth (the law). The devil seeks to lead man astray on earth, away from his vocation, in which the law is embodied, and to deprive him of salvation by destroying his faith in the gospel.⁴⁹

The devil's onslaughts consist of temptations to misuse a good and divine office by mismanaging one's vocation. Thus, Luther says in effect that "...man's cross and despair come both from God and the devil."⁵⁰

One's vocation becomes the focal point of decision in the combat between God and the devil. In this combat the Word is God's weapon and therefore the spiritual government modifies the shape of vocation under earthly government. In his vocation, man becomes God's mask on earth wherever man works.

For Luther...God is one who comes down, veiled in the larve of His creatures, and meets man precisely in the material substantial sphere of the external world. In the stations, offices, and vocations He ordains, His divine will of Love confronts men. It confronts them,

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 162.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 80.

of course, primarily as Law; but for those who have eyes to see, the Gospel is there as well.⁵¹

Man does not have freedom in that which lies in the spiritual government, (heaven). But in those things that lie in the earthly government, man is free.

Before God man can be free only as evil. He cannot be separated from God and independent of God without being captive to God's adversary and foe, a slave of the devil.⁵²

Therefore, before resurrection we are always confronted by an unconquered devil, even while we believe in God's victory through Christ in our vocation. But after the eschatological consummation, the devil is conquered and Christ's mastery is revealed.

Old Man and New Man. In Luther's thought, there is no such thing as a man who stands by himself. Rather, man's situation is characterized by the two-fold fact that he stands between earth and heaven, and between God and the devil.

Man stands between creation and resurrection in the form of life on earth through vocation. Vocation bears witness to the belief that the body is to be raised, since vocation lays the law and the cross on the body, while the body is on earth.

⁵¹Phillip S. Watson, Let God Be God (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1947), p. 115.

⁵²Wingren, op. cit., p. 105.

Since it is man's situation on earth to meet his neighbor, his vocation then comprehends all his relations with different "neighbors".

Just as the expression "God's command" is directly coupled with love to one's neighbor, so it is directly coupled with vocation; Beruf and Befehl (vocation and command) is, for Luther, a natural combination of terms.⁵³

Inquiry into God's will (command) and the neighbor's need (Vocation) free from self-centered concern, is the situation in which one's heart has found peace and lives in faith.

It is in faith then, that life's center is moved from earth to heaven. When that center is moved, the burden that falls upon man on earth appears in another light; it presents itself as a "cross". It is in the cross of vocation that man works in his occupation on earth until death. This work is to be born in faith. In that way one is really "in Christ". In other words, what is hard and burdensome is transmuted into good.

At death, the "old man" has died completely through the cross of vocation, and the entire man, "new man", has been raised as a spiritual body without sin.

It is the "old man" then, who must bear vocation's cross as long as life on earth lasts and the battle against

⁵³Ibid., p. 203.

the devil continues. As long as man continues in his earthly vocation, there can be no end to the struggle.

After death comes a new kingdom free from the cross; heaven has taken the place of earth, God has conquered the devil, and man has been raised from the dead. Then man's struggle is at an end.⁵⁴

Martin Luther's model for vocation is "new" in comparrison with medieval thought, but very "old" in terms of its parrallels in Scripture. In contrast to medieval thought and practice, Luther opts for an eschatological reference point when formulating a doctrine of vocation. In further contrast to medieval thought, Luther perceives vocation as all that man does in life on earth, rather than holding a narrow monastic view which was earth denying. Luther places a greater emphasis on "occupation" as vocation, but a complete understanding of Luther would not allow one to over generalize this as the only form of vocation. Luther does emphasize work heavily, but this must be seen as a reaction to medieval thought and therefore a necessary corrective enabling the convergence once again of "work" as a subordinate which is essentially determined by "vocation".

Both Luther and John Calvin closely identified Christian vocation with daily work. In some respects, they

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 251.

revived the Biblical perspective of men like Isaiah and Paul, in which devotion to God and service to neighbor were inseparably bound together in the concept of calling. In other respects, especially in the application of the term "calling" to everyday life,

...they ventured beyond anything explicitly spelled out in the Biblical text. Their intent was nothing less than to reaffirm, with new fullness of detail, the penetration of every nook and corner of the Christian life with the summons and promise of God.⁵⁵

Post-Reformation and the American Gospel of Work.

There is a sense in which the Biblical views of vocation and work were "resurrected" during the Reformation. What happened to these doctrines during the Post-Reformation and the advent of the American Industrial Revolution heavily influences our twentieth century understanding of work and Christian vocation.

The years which followed Luther's lifetime were characterized by a series of steps which led further and further away from his great insight. The primacy of faith in God and the requirement of love for neighbor made it impossible for Luther to regard daily work as an end in itself, or to view with favor an outstanding degree of worldly prosperity. Yet, seventeenth-century Calvinists and sectarian individualists, who were busily engaged in

⁵⁵Calhoun, op. cit., p. 84.

bringing a new economic order to birth, saw no problem in judging one's prosperity, if diligently worked for in one's calling, as a mark of divine approval.

Thus individualistic tendencies in Protestantism, legitimate though one sided, were stressed at the expense of the great unifying principles of the universal reign of God and the Christian corporate life.

...in a time of growing human prowess, the Protestant identification of daily work with divine calling was inverted, so that calling came generally to mean simply human work, with God left out.⁵⁶

Thus we see in the Post-Reformation that the reformer's ideal of capturing the world of work for the glory of God was replaced by the ideal of working for man's glory or for one's own enhancement. Christian vocation became secularized in this period.

A Protestantism which set out to "spiritualize commerce" became so corrupted by the pressures of practical economics that it ended up by "commercializing the Spirit".⁵⁷

There followed a growing isolation of daily work from acts of worship, the dividing of the world for many people into sacred and non-sacred parts, and a widening triumph of secularity which made the traditional appraisal of work as Christian vocation sound naive.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Robert S. Michaelson, "Work and Vocation in American Industrial Society," in Nelson, op. cit., p. 117.

As the business world of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries freed itself from churchly and governmental control, it insisted on regarding itself as being free from criticism based on Christian morality.

The will of God was either equated with successful business practice, or it was excluded from any effective relevance to worldly affairs...Faith in human progress replaced faith in God. The terms "vocation" and "calling" were still retained, but they came to mean little or nothing more than worldly activities pursued with diligence for their own sake, and for the sake of worldly rewards.⁵⁸

By the nineteenth century American Protestantism had almost completely succumbed to the American gospel of work. "The religious life was freely and openly advocated as assuring...success. Service to God and Mammon were harmonized..."⁵⁹ "Calling" was interpreted almost entirely in terms of a highly emotional and personal experience of conversion, an experience which really had little direct bearing on one's daily work.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century the leaders of the Social Gospel movement began to call a halt to the sanctification of wealth-getting. They discerned a distinct incompatibility between the gospel of work and wealth, and the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Social Gospel Movement called for a renewed appreciation of the social nature of

⁵⁸Calhoun, op. cit., p. 111.

⁵⁹Michaelsen, op. cit., p. 120.

sin and salvation.

Although they did very little directly to reconstruct the doctrine of vocation they did help to lay some of the ground work for that reconstruction by their criticism of the individualism, optimism, and materialism of the gospel of work...and by renewed appreciation for man's social nature.⁶⁰

Walter Rauschenbusch the famous spokesman of the Social Gospel movement had little use for the kind of capitalism that justified maximum wealth-getting. His critique against capitalism was harsh, but then he was witnessing the very worst of the "gospel of work". Rauschenbusch was not against individualism for he acknowledged its contribution to human society. In fact he emphasized the need for strong, self-reliant men. However, he was quick to add that:

...when a theory of so-called economic individualism has resulted in turning the property of a nation over to a limited group; in equipping them with rights and powers which only the community wield; in pitting the self-interest of the most resourceful men against the public welfare; in giving them power to hold up the progress of humanity by extorting monopoly profits... then that theory has gone to seed and it is time to plow the ground for a new crop.⁶¹

Rauschenbusch felt that the overgrowth of private interest which was being institutionalized as capitalism's way of life was decidedly un-Christian. He called for a

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 120.

⁶¹Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order (New York: Macmillan, 1912), p. 290.

complete reversal of policy in order to establish the law of Christ.⁶²

The "gospel of work" also has been labeled as the "Protestant Ethic." William Whyte, characterizes the "Protestant Ethic" as largely, "...the sacredness of property, the enervating effect of security, the virtues of thrift, of hard work and independence."⁶³ "Hard work" is the point at which the Protestant Ethic parallels the "gospel of work".

The basic affirmation or assumption of the gospel of work is that hard work will gain all that one needs in this life (those needs usually being materialistically conceived). Any hard working man can make his way without the help of society, the state, or his friends. Thus, anybody who does not make it is either lazy or inefficient, or both. This "gospel" has been well supported in America by the prevailing tenets of classical or laissez-faire economics. Robert Michaelson summarizes these tenets as follows:

(1)...the economic sphere is primary in man's life...and all that a man does is guided...by his selfish desire to enhance his material welfare; (2) the confidence that the individual can gain his way by following his selfish urges; (3) the optimism that society's interests will be

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³William H. Whyte, Jr., The Organization Man (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956), p. 5.

best served when individuals are allowed or encouraged to pursue their own selfish interests; and (4) the view that the primary function of the state is to "let the individual alone" in that pursuit and to protect the property which he accumulates.⁶⁴

It certainly was, and in some cases still is, an exuberantly optimistic gospel. If everyone could believe that self interest automatically improves the lot of all, then the application of hard work should eventually produce a heaven on earth. This of course is a very comforting "gospel" or "ethic", for it gives people license to believe socially and publicly what they had always believed privately. This philosophy was the result of both a perverted Gospel and a twisting of the doctrine of Christian vocation.

It is indeed a sad commentary on the Christian faith that during this period man,

...was fortified by the assurance that he was pursuing his obligation to God, and...what for centuries had been looked on as the meanest greed, a rising middle class would interpret as the earthly manifestation of God's will.⁶⁵

This sturdy individualism which was fostered by conditions in the West from the sixteenth century on took a sound shellacking from the First World War and was gradually giving way under the pressures of an advancing indus-

⁶⁴Michaelsen, op. cit., p. 121.

⁶⁵Whyte, op. cit., p. 18.

trialization which has, in many ways, seriously undercut or limited the freedom of the individual worker.

...anyone who would speak to the industrial worker about exercising his Christian vocation in his work must first begin with an understanding of his subjection to a large production process over which he has little or no control and in which he is able to find little opportunity for the expression of his whole self.⁶⁶

The confidence in a rugged individualism has begun to subside somewhat. This is increasingly due to a complex social fabric which has industrialized the common man and institutionalized the corporation man. With this turn of events contemporary man is more willing to rely upon group effort and is finding satisfaction in community achievement. There is an increasing tendency for the factory community and the executive office to find a certain completeness in "togetherness". This, of course, is a significant move away from the highly individualized "gospel of work", but lest we become too optimistic, we must be reminded that this trend clothes a subtle inheritance from the previous "gospel"; a prudence for calculating gain with a close eye to personal advantage. This trend is also marked by a personal morality, which, never being overly religious, has nevertheless just enough "religion" to help one along.

⁶⁶Michaelsen, op. cit., p. 131.

If God merits attention at all as a source of power it is as kind of a junior partner who enhances the prestige of the senior member of the firm and fills in the little crevices in the structure of success.⁶⁷

We are indeed a long distance removed from the day's of Luther, when work and Christian vocation were seriously united in Christian living and where the touch stone to all vocation was service and love toward one's neighbor.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 153.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIAN VOCATION AND THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

As has been stated earlier, legitimate contemporary business ethics problem-solving must be undertaken with a clear understanding of what Christian vocation means in the Biblical, historical and theological resources of our faith. Chapter II described both the Biblical roots of the doctrine of work and vocation and the historical variations of their interpretation. In a sense, we have arrived at the contemporary scene only to find that work and vocation, as popularly conceived, are out of sorts with the traditions of our faith. It is the contention of this research that the confusion accompanying the contemporary view of Christian vocation is central to our inability in dealing with business ethics constructively, responsibly and theologically.

Related to this is our confusion in the church concerning the role of the layman and his part in the church's ministry. Only after these matters have been clarified and reconstructed can we begin to understand the position of a Christian layman who faces an ethically problematic issue in the occupational aspect of his Christian vocation.

It will be the task of this chapter to describe more fully the contemporary view of vocation and work and then to develop a doctrine of the church with special

emphasis being placed on the role of the layman in Christian vocation. This endeavor will hopefully resolve the confusion which surrounds our understanding of vocation and work, and will provide us with a platform more in keeping with the Biblical, historical and theological tenets of our faith from which we can more responsibly encounter a specific case in business ethics (Chapter IV).

I. THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCHMAN AND WORK

The Popular View of Work

In today's occupational world, the concept of vocation which is popularly held is broad enough to include whatever a man does during his working hours. And yet, at the sametime, Christian vocation usually refers to one's working within the structure of the church professionally and Christian "calling" is almost unanimously conceived of as an invitation to the professional ministry. It is not surprising then, that most churchmen do not think of their work as an aspect of their "calling" in Christian vocation. This situation did not arrive by chance, for we have seen its historical roots in Chapter II.

Among the ancient Israelites, the New Testament world and the reformers, vocation was viewed primarily in terms of the calling of men and the work of God. However, in the Post-Reformation years, the Reformation's idea of

capturing the world of work for the glory of God was replaced by the ideal of working for man's glory or for one's own enhancement. This secularization of vocation has carried over into the twentieth century, and while increasing industrialism and institutionalism have dealt a blow to the sturdy individualism of the "gospel of work", we nevertheless have as a legacy from that period the radical separation between one's work and the concept of Christian vocation.

As we have seen, men once knew that every Christian is summoned to his task and his destiny by God. Since the Reformation, and especially today, busy churchmen, suspecting no call of God in their lives, perform certain minimal Sunday duties, but pay the clergyman to handle the religious side of life on a professional, expert, specialized basis. This gap which has grown up between one's faith and one's work is popularly expressed by the slogan "Don't try to mix religion and business." Related to this is the emotional pronouncement, "The church should not be involved in politics." These slogans reveal a popularly held belief that religion is a private matter and that daily work and politics are public concerns. The two should not be mixed!

...this American ideal of religion is openly hostile to the Biblical description of the Church as the Body of

Christ living in the midst of the traffic and turmoil of conflict of the world on behalf of the world.¹

Contemporary man does not see the connection between faith and work. This of course is largely due to a poor understanding of Christian vocation and a very unfair understanding of what the Christ event means for man in the world. Dietrich Bonhoeffer has said,

In Christ we are offered the possibility of partaking in the reality of God and in the reality of the world, but not in one without the other. The reality of God discloses itself only by setting me entirely in the reality of the world, and when I encounter the reality of the world it is always sustained, accepted, and reconciled in the reality of God.²

"Religion" does have importance for modern occupational man, but only as it tends to make a person honest or dependable or gifted with some sort of peace of mind. When "religion" does this for people, it does it for them in their personal private lives and in that sense it is a "good idea." Seldom is the Christian faith thought of as a force which affects job life.

This habit of picking isolated experiences and segments of human life and, for one reason or another, calling them religious can be perhaps the most insidious form of antireligion. It denies, in effect, that religion can and should pervade all of life.³

¹William Stringfellow, A Private and Public Faith (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 25.

²Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ethics (New York: Macmillian, 1959), p. 60.

³Robert Lowry Calhoun, God and the Day's Work (New York: Association Press, 1943), p. 1.

Work, then, proceeds in the American scene without any decisive reference to one's faith or to the will of God. Instead, the success which work brings, or is maintained to bring, to the individual and the corporation and the nation, is success measured by non-Christian standards. These standards are usually income, prestige and status. In addition, the standard of living has become a primary test of accomplishment in one's work. To a very real degree, freedom is measured by what one can command with his income.⁴

In today's business world the standards of "...Christ's love rarely animates the range and depth of the whole person, nor permeates the working structures of life."⁵ In addition, morality has come to be defined in practice more in terms of institutional demands than in terms of the demands of the Gospel.

This contemporary emphasis on the separation of faith and work, I believe, has led to two interesting phenomena. First of all, the American public has "...set off in anxious pursuit of material and physical substitutes

⁴Robert S. Michaelsen, "Work and Vocation in American Industrial Society," in John Oliver Nelson (ed.) Work and Vocation (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 153.

⁵Robert S. Bilheimer, "A Christian Strategy," in Ibid., p. 193.

for spiritual realities."⁶ There is little doubt that modern man is in frantic pursuit of more and more "things" and more and more excitement. Secondly, and certainly more subtle, is the situation that finds many laymen withdrawing from active church lives into secular fellowships where their daily work does matter. Undoubtedly, the tremendous number of businessmen who have turned to noon time service clubs reflects the chasm which exists between faith and work. It is easy to understand why men would say "Rotary is my religion now," for in the context of these groups professional skills are honored, and man's daily occupation is integral with the fellowship he has with business associates.

The question, "Who is to blame?", is a difficult one to answer. Up to this point, it sounds as if the layman is largely responsible. And yet, the layman is responsible only because the church has failed in its prior responsibility to teach an accurate concept of the doctrine of Christian vocation. The failure lies primarily in an abortive attempt to proclaim the Biblical, historical and theological justification of Christian vocation to churchmen. The popular thought that the power for achievement in vocation

⁶John Oliver Nelson, "Introduction," in Ibid., p. 26.

comes from ourselves could perhaps be traced back to the church's failure to adequately proclaim that the Incarnation lays claim to every occupation. Unfortunately, the Incarnation has been largely confined and housed in the church building, or in the ministry, or in the sacraments. "The Incarnation means Christianity in a workaday, practical life among laymen doing ordinary things as redeemed persons."⁷

Contemporary churchmen sense in no way the connection between work and Christian vocation which is realized through the Incarnation. It is little wonder, then, that what once was thought of as a Christian's "strangeness" in the world has been eliminated. As long as man sees no evidence of the Incarnation in his work, it is not hard to understand why churchmen feel no special calling in their work, a calling which would differentiate them from others. In this situation, gone is the "strangeness" once felt by Christian man whose impulse was to sacrifice when others around him grasped for power; gone is the "strangeness" of Christian man seeking mercy amidst subtle cruelty; and gone is the "strangeness" of Christian man opting for moral principle when morality is spurned or ignored.⁸

⁷Ibid., p. 25.

⁸Bilheimer, op. cit., p. 191.

Christian View of Work

The Christian doctrine of vocation, which modern man seemingly knows little about, is currently being revived by theologians who realize how misunderstood it has been since the Reformation. Robert Michaelsen claims that this new concern for Christian vocation is the result of increasing interest in the Reformation period and in the needs of our industrial and institutional society.⁹ This revival is necessary if the church has any hope of rescuing the doctrine of vocation from totally secular definitions. If this revival is a serious one, then it is good that it is grounded in Reformation thought. Since the Reformation the doctrine of vocation has slowly decayed until today it is hardly distinguishable from secular definitions of vocation. Our contemporary working situations are sadly in need of being redeemed and transformed into more appropriate vessels for God's will and man's response. In this sense, a return to Luther's thought is essential. Man lives in covenant with God and man, and his whole life must show it, including his work.

The working life of the Christian believer is in essential ways an embodiment of this covenant and an oppor-

⁹Michaelsen, op. cit., p. 120.

tunity for the worker to acknowledge and affirm it as his own way of life.¹⁰

It is here that we need to reemphasize Luther's claim that God's Word does not ordinarily come to us in some isolated spot, but rather it is most intimately involved in the human relationships and the associations in which we live. This means that God's Word penetrates all of our living, and, most necessarily, our working lives.

If we hear Luther correctly, one's work becomes a Christian vocation when, on the one hand, the job becomes a medium through which God's presence may be recognized and His summons may be heard, and on the other hand, when the job becomes a medium in which human response to God's summons may find appropriate expression. "In its primary character...work is peculiarly well suited to embody in one concrete form the demand and the promise that are involved in the divine word to men."¹¹

We are not trying to sanctify "work above other aspects of life, for we know that there is no substitute for faith and love in all of life. In this sense, our calling means far more than doing our work well and maintaining our station in life. To fulfill our calling of course means to relate all that we do to the general life of

¹⁰Robert L. Calhoun, "Work as Christian Vocation Today," in Nelson, op. cit., p. 183.

¹¹Ibid., p. 165.

society and to the urgent issues of social justice. However, our concern here is only with what we know as "work" or "job" as one facet of life. Christian vocation is the total life style of a man's calling and therefore his work can be an aspect of his Christian vocation. If his work is devoted, it can be regarded as an aspect of his Christian vocation in so far as it is a medium for the Word of God to man, and for man's response to God.

There are, of course, some men and women who have this understanding of Christian vocation in their occupation. Unfortunately, this all too often leads to a very stuffy and superior feeling on behalf of the Christian worker. Often he understands the claims of the faith but in his approach to witnessing his faith, alienates his fellow workers by pious verbalisms and judgmental attacks. This attitude is illustrated by the individual who feels he must carry the Gospel to the world, failing to recognize the universal presence of the Word in the world. To be sure, the complex network of human relationships in labor needs and awaits fulfillment by the Gospel. But the sanctimonious approach is as harmful as the predominate attitude that work has no relationship to one's faith.

We must reiterate that the,

...isolation of clergy from laity, and of places and times regarded as set apart for God from the places and times in which men and women spend most of their

working time and energy, has resulted in a way of life intolerably divided against itself.¹²

It is one of the theses of this paper that if the church were to become laymen again, expressing their concerns in shared fellowship, bringing their work lives week after week into Christian perspective, then both church life and job life (Christian vocation and work) would reclaim a unity and glory which they have largely lacked since the Reformation. This then, would also restore business ethics to its proper theological character. The problem of what the church is and who the laymen are in relationship to the church stands in the way of this unification.

II. DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH AS LAITY IN THE WORLD

The major stumbling block which is preventing articulate churchmen from ministering to the world in which they live has been a very poor understanding of what the "priesthood of all believers" really means. If laymen had a more adequate theological grasp of their role in the work of the church, the chasm which exists between faith and work, church and business ethics, would be made smaller.

¹²Ibid., p. 160.

Therefore, in this section of the chapter we will first of all attempt to define the term "laity" by tracing its historical roots, and then describe the present misunderstanding of the term "laity". Because the role of the churchman in the world is closely related to the theological doctrines of the Incarnation and Word of God, we shall next discuss them. Lastly, we shall attempt to describe how the preceding two sections influence and inform the church's ministry in the world. In doing this we shall have theologically drawn in closer union one's faith and job, and of course made business ethics a more religious concern instead of a concern brought about by a non-theological cultural morality.

The Laity

Since Martin Luther and the Reformation the Protestant Church has prided itself on believing in the "priesthood of all believers". And yet, outside of brief acknowledgment on "Layman's Sunday," the doctrine has very little applicability or popularity. Both inside Protestantism and outside in the non-churched world, popular opinion has it that the church is primarily the building and its clergymen. As a consequence of this climate of thinking, the laity in the church regards itself of minor and subsidiary significance.

In popular usage, a "layman" in any field is one who is usually unqualified to speak or judge. And so it is in the church that laymen, though they may be very activity oriented, have acquired the notion of being ignorant when it comes to matters concerning the meaning of their faith. Of course this has not and is not always the case. Some of the first prominent theological thinkers in the church were laymen of tremendous ability. To mention but a few of the best known: Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine. Even today, a layman like William Stringfellow is widely respected, but by and large he and others like him are viewed as exceptions to the general rule.

In general, it is the clergyman who today undertakes by himself the ministry of the church. This is by and large approved by the layman who delegates the church's ministry to one man--the minister. Most laymen are satisfied with their contributory role in the church's ministry because they have never thought about their true place nor have ever been encouraged to think along that line. It is little wonder that the double-standard as evolved concerning the role of laymen and clergymen. Biblically, it is not the layman's role to be the minister's helper, enabling him to perform his ecclesiastical duties. Let us try to trace the evolution of this misconception.

Hendrik Kraemer has said that the significance of 'laos' was beginning to lose its New Testament meaning as early as the end of the first century. The main reason for this was the emergence of the ordained clergy as a separate status, over and against the ordinary congregation, i.e. the 'laos'.¹³

Between the second and sixteenth centuries extremely little was done in developing the role of the laity. The hierarchical and ecclesiastical segment of the church developed with increasing power and status, which only served to separate more dramatically the 'laos' from the clergy.

In the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the idea of the "clergy" was rejected. In principal the distinction between clergy and laity dissolved. In practice, however, the laity, in a setting different from that which preceded the Reformation, nevertheless remained as of old the objects, and in no way became subjects.¹⁴

Kraemer explains this failure of the Reformation as follows:

When...in principle a strong vindication of the laity as subject and not merely object was made, the plea in concrete reality broke down on the general inaptitude

¹³Hendrick Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 50.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 61-67.

of the laity to function as a subject in the biblical sense, and...on the enormous preoccupation with the raising and implementing of the ministry.¹⁵

For the greater part of its history, the church has provided little place in its thinking for expressing the meaning of "laity" in the life of the church. At best, the laity has always been "the flock," it has always been the object and never the subject of its own calling and responsibility. Thus there has been an absence of the laity in the self-understanding of the church throughout history.

If we are to have a vision of the church in which the laity receives its full meaning, then we must develop a view of the clergy as but one aspect of the whole church's ministry.

Theologically speaking, laymen must be given their proper stance as equals to the clergy in the ministry of the church. Sociologically speaking, the emergence of laity as ministers could not be more timely. Gibson Winter has remarked that the day of direct intervention by pastors in community life is rapidly disappearing except in smaller towns.

The direct influence of pastors upon community development becomes more and more difficult; consequently the influence of Christianity on the residential environment in coming generations will have to be the work of

¹⁵Ibid., p. 72.

laity who are familiar with the technical problems and engaged in the planning processes.¹⁶

There is little doubt, sociologically speaking, that a laity who participate in the processes of society and develop theological sensitivity form the only possible church in a mass society. Except in a few isolated instances, we have seen clergymen lose a great deal of their prestige. In most communities the clergy are merely hired spokesmen for religion among men. Often they are invited to decorate public life, but are ultimately restrained from intervening significantly in it.

If we were to regain the New Testament understanding of the priesthood of all believers, not only would the role of the laity be enhanced, but the influence of the clergy would, in addition, be advanced.

William Stringfellow's formula is a precise statement on the proper role of the clergy and laity in ministry. "There is no priesthood without a laity serving the world; there is no laity without a priesthood serving the laity."¹⁷

This formula, in effect, is saying that the church's ministry is one in which the clergy equip the laymen for their ministry to the world. The minister is the one who

¹⁶Gibson Winter, The New Creation as Metropolis (New York: Macmillian, 1963), pp. 9-10.

¹⁷Stringfellow, op. cit., p. 44.

enables the congregation to perform pastoral service in the world.

The ministry of the laity has real meaning if it is a part of the church's view to recognize the laity's essential place and responsible partnership in the church's vocation. In this position laymen would constitute a real adult Christianity, in which both the weak and the strong, the simple and the educated, the influential and the common are all directed by one spirit and purpose; to be a real community in Christ, in the world.

Of course the unique, yet difficult position of the laity is that, living and moving in the context of the day-to-day world, and having literally to serve two masters and to live in two worlds, necessitates continual decision making as to their primary loyalty. Therefore, the main part of the ministry of the clergy should be to enable the laity to fulfill their peculiar and complicated ministry.

The ministry of the clergy, then, is a ministry to the Body of Christ, (the laymen) in their relationship to each other. These relationships follow their incredibly diversified ministry within the world.

There is little doubt that a return to the proper Biblical and theological understanding of Christian vocation is inseparably related to a view of the church which includes both clergy and laymen in its ministry.

We now need to discuss the theological importance and justification of the church's ministry in the world.

The Incarnation and Word of God

In the field of contemporary theology there have been many voices reminding the church of its ministry in the world. Under the banner of "Church Renewal" these voices have called for the church's involvement in the secular world. Many of these pronouncements have been good and necessary ones. However, at the same time, there have been voices whose intentions are good, but whose theology or reason for acting is based on an obsolete social gospel that fails in its theological responsibilities.

Horst Symanowski, whose book The Christian Witness in an Industrial Society deals creatively with the relationship of the church in an ever increasing industrial society, nevertheless falls victim to the pitfalls of the old social gospel when he attempts to justify his approach to ministry theologically. Symanowski, and many like him, call for the church to be servant in the world because our Lord was the world's servant. This emphasis on imitating Jesus in the world misses the central theological emphasis of our faith.

To imitate our Lord is a command and a good one, but it fails to take in account the full dimension of our Lord's mission and ministry. To say that the life, death and reurrection of Jesus served only as an example for all

men to follow glosses over the redemptive, saving nature of God's activity in the Incarnation. We do serve the world because Jesus' example points us in that direction, but only after the prior act of experiencing the power of the Incarnation and the Word of God which grasps us in an intensely personal way so that we can do no other than in freedom obey His command.

A theology that emphasizes serving the world where we are because Jesus did, fails on two accounts. First of all it fails because it does not answer the question why we must serve. To have affection for Jesus is not reason enough to justify a serving ministry. Secondly, this approach fails because theologically it gives no reason why secular man needs the church's service, except for humanitarian needs which any organization in society could give. Let us attempt to speak to this first failure now.

A Christian theology for the church's ministry to the world must be heavily influenced, not by the example of Christ only, but by the power of the Incarnation and the Word of God in the lives of individual Christians. This theology emphasizes the personal way in which the saving nature of the Incarnation affects our lives, whereas the other theology only gives us reasons for acting.

The Incarnation and the Crucifixion are acts of humility and obedience on Jesus' part, acts which reveal

the heart of God. In that sense they are acts which open up the way to a life of new obedience and hope. A theology of the church as laity in this connection means an acquiring of the significance of God's revelation in Christ for our thinking, our attitudes, our decisions and actions.¹⁸

A Christian then is distinguished by his radical esteem for the Incarnation and by his reverence for the life of God in the whole of creation. A faith in Jesus as the Christ is an acknowledgment that Jesus discloses who we are. To be in Christ is to come to know ourselves and our true identity through the decisive event of human history--Jesus the Christ. The Christ event means that God cares; that He is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Existentially, the reconciliation of the world with God in Jesus Christ establishes a man in unity with both God and the whole world.

With this knowledge, and the experience of it, the Christian is free to live within the common life of the world, assured and excited by knowing that he lives in the presence of God's Word, no matter where. The church's service and ministry to the world is therefore contingent on its exposure to the Word and its message--that in Christ, God has created a new mankind of love and reconciliation which discloses the true nature of all men and their life

¹⁸Kraemer, op. cit., p. 92.

together. To be a Christian ministering in the world is to have experienced this saving message in one's own life. This then speaks to the first failure mentioned earlier. The second failure of not providing the reason why secular man needs the church's service is the subject of the following section.

The Incarnation, Word of God, and the Church's Ministry in the World

If the saving message of God's love in the Incarnation is the criterion for one who is identified as a Christian, then it is the proclamation of this message that constitutes the church's ministry in the world. By proclamation is meant the various kinds of service performed in the world, both verbal and non-verbal.

One hears that the task of ministry to the world is one of making religion "relevant" to the decisional aspects of daily work, family life or politics. This well intentioned, exceedingly popular doctrine asserts that the content and relationships of religion are strangely different from the content and relationships of secular life. Therefore, some application of religious principles is required in order to make religion relevant to secular issues.

This doctrine implies that the things of God are remote from the things of men, though some sufficiently "religious" people may connect the two. It is this writer's

view that it is misleading to speak of the action of the church in the world in terms of "making the Gospel relevant" to the secular. The church, as the Body of Christ, lives in the world as the unity of God and the world in Christ. Therefore God's gift of the Incarnation is a gift for all men, both inside and outside of the church. The church as the Body of Christ lives in the world on behalf of the world, an intercession for the world.

God's Word then is present in the world as Christ is present. The ministry of the church to the world is discerning God's presence and exposing it on behalf of the world. Therefore the ministry or vocation of each member of the Body is participation in that intercession in every experience wherever it occurs. The joy of the Christian life is that nowhere is the Word of God absent.¹⁹ The laymen of the church,

...enlightened by the Word of God within the congregation...will become sensitive to and perceptive of the Word of God as they encounter the Word in the common life of the world in which their various ministries as lay people take place.²⁰

The power, however, to discern God's presence in common life is imparted when one becomes a Christian, an event, as we noted earlier, in which the power of the Word

¹⁹Stringfellow, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

²⁰Ibid., p. 58.

of God in one's own personal history is manifest over and over again. The task of exposing God's Word is not an easy one, for often the Word stands very much over and against the world's existence and its disregard and arrogance toward that Word. This of course is the tension or the risk of ministry and affects the laymen probably more dramatically than it does the clergy. But the world is dependent upon the church for this witness, though the world sometimes does not know it.

The world can only experience the reality of his hidden Kingship and of the operating redemptive order in Christ according to the measure of the faith, the hope, the love, the courage and the endurance, which live in the church.²¹

The church exists only as that community in the world which cares about, observes, and testifies about God's presence in the world in all things, at every time and place. The church is the company of those who know of and rejoice in the presence of God in the world.

The inner concern of God towards the world entered into the world in Jesus Christ, and it is through the church that this divine concern continues to be proclaimed and exposed in the world. The church "gathered" celebrates the Word of God through sacramental worship in anticipation of being "scattered" in the world, discerning the same Word

²¹Kraemer, op. cit., p. 150.

of God in common life.

...if God's Word is present in common life, even though hidden except to the apprehension of faith, then the Word of God itself constitutes the essential and radical truth of common life and of every and any aspect of the world's existence at any and all times. It is in the Word of God that the secret of life is to be known.²²

This ministry of exposing the Word of God is of course a crucial part of any understanding of one's Christian vocation.

What does secular man gain from this ministry? The church's ministry to the world comes in the form of exposing the Word of God whose presence in the world, though veiled, was made manifest through the Incarnation. When the world, i.e. secular man, encounters the Word of God as the saving event in history, he opens the avenue of his own history to ultimate questioning and hope.²³ As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, faith in Jesus as the Christ is an acknowledgment that Jesus discloses who we are. To be in Christ is to come to know ourselves and our true identity. We discover the meaning of our past through Him.²⁴ An exposure to the Word of God then, calls all men to compare the difference between their own history and the

²²Stringfellow, op. cit., p. 69.

²³Winter, op. cit., p. 70.

²⁴Ibid.

decisive event of human history--Jesus as the Christ.²⁵

Therefore, the work of the church in the world engages secular man in reflection on the meaning of his history and "...to summon men to the search for the meaning of the events in which they are engaged."²⁶ The church reflects with the world on the present meaning of the saving history. "The call to reflection is a call to judgment and promise in a world which has surrendered itself to technique, propaganda and threats of massive retaliation."²⁷ Therefore the church is not simply serving the world on the world's terms, but it serves the Word of God by exposing its message of judgment and promise within the structures of man's world.²⁸

Coexistent with this reflection, though by necessity following it in sequence, is the church's ministry of confirming mankind in its freedom to fashion its future history. In so doing the Word of God affirms man's freedom for history by declaring the promise that is given to him in history. The act of exposing this liberating message to men also frees the Biblical faith,

from its miraculous and supernaturalistic garments, becoming consonant with the categories of historical responsibility in which men live. The pretensions of

²⁵Ibid., pp. 70-71.

²⁶Ibid., p. 71.

²⁷Ibid., p. 72.

²⁸Ibid.

economic forces and social collectivities are recognized, moreover, as signs of idolatry in history, for the One through whom men are freed for history confirms them in their freedom against their own pretensions to finality.²⁹

The church, then, proclaims and lives a message of deliverance, freedom and hope in a world which finds itself caught in bondage and hopelessness. In the name of this future to which all men belong and which is theirs to acknowledge, the church summons men and women in every walk of life to consider God's Word as the gift which discloses their true identity and ultimate hope.

In addition to affirming man's freedom for history, the church strengthens man in the responsible exercise of this freedom. This freedom which contains deliverance from the powers of this world also allows men to assume responsibility for their history in this world. In that sense, the Word of God calls all men to their true identity in a responsible society that helps shape the future.

The servant church in a secularized world...stands within the milieu of the historical responsibility of mankind, acknowledging with men and before God their true identity as the New Mankind, the New Creation, in the shaping of this world.³⁰

With this concept of ministry in mind, we can see that it is not the true concern of the church to win man's attention away from his secular concerns to a religious

²⁹Ibid., p. 60.

³⁰Ibid., p. 73.

sacred concern. Rather, the church's essential task is to bring men to consciousness of their history, to recognition of the decisions that they face and to the freedom that is theirs in openness toward the future. This then, is a ministry of reconciliation whereby the church restores communication to society. This ministry of exposing the reconciling love of Christ through His Body in the world is a ministry which sustains the open communication of the "New Mankind" within the arena of human struggle and alienation. Not only is this ministry theologically justifiable, but sociologically speaking, our society needs desperately an institution which can participate in public life without acting as a faction in search of private gain or advantage. The church's aim cannot be to conquer the world; rather, its call is to interpenetrate the world and so communicate with it.

Being in dialogue with the world, being dispersed in the world as representing the Christian Church in its disturbing and healing quality, is foremost a matter of being and not of doing.³¹

If the laity of the church is in the world being what they are called to be, then a real uninterrupted dialogue between the church and the world happens through them. They, daily, form a repeated penetration and projection of the church in the world. The laity minister in

³¹Kraemer, op. cit., p. 173.

the world as the people in whom there is alive the reality of God's redemptive power and the expectation of His Kingdom as the order of existence for which the whole world unconsciously yearns.

Conclusion

We have seen in this section of the chapter the vital importance of the layman in the church's ministry in the world. The clergy should be viewed as those who care and nurture the members of the Body of Christ (the laity) for their several, various and common tasks in the world. The clergy serve the laymen who come out of the world now and then to worship their God and study their faith.

We have seen that it is the ministry of the church to proclaim God's Word by exposing its presence in the whole of life. A theology of the Incarnation attests to the presence of the Word of God in the common life of the world, though it is sometimes veiled. Therefore, the church knows that the Word of God is present even in the places where one might think it is absent. So Christians do not hide nor blush nor disguise anything about this world as it is. Rather, the church's task is to discern the often hidden Word of God in the world.

In the history of the Christian Church the categories of sacred and secular, or spiritual and temporal have

served to express claims of the dominion and power of the sacred and spiritual over the other. In the church-world relationship, as we have tried to express it, the church stands in the world in a relationship of service and witness. We have tried to emphasize that the church and the world are both God's, but each in a particular sense. The world is God's creation, man's working place to manifest partnership with God, and the domain which serves as the stage for the fulfillment of God's will.

The church, where faithful to the Gospel, is not the place where men come to seek God; on the contrary, the church building is just the place where men gather to declare that God takes the initiative in seeking men. The church, as the Body of Christ, exists to present to the world and to celebrate in the world, and on behalf of the world, God's presence, power and action in the on-going life of the world.

It is in this sense that there can be no radical division between sacred and secular, clergy and laymen, private faith and public life, and most important for our concern, Christian vocation and work.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY IN THE LIGHT OF A CASE STUDY IN BUSINESS ETHICS

The purpose of this chapter is to bring together some of the ideas developed in the earlier chapters and to apply them to a specific case study in business ethics. In order to do that we shall first of all summarize the material discussed up to this point, showing its applicability to the discussion of ethical issues in any occupation. In the second half of the chapter a case study in business ethics (Planned Obsolescence) will be described, showing how the concepts of Christian vocation and the church's ministry in the world inform the Christian businessman in his decision making task.

I. SYNTHESIS: CHRISTIAN VOCATION AND BUSINESS ETHICS

Early in this research it was suggested that the contemporary understanding of business ethics, both in books and in popular thought, was that of isolated decision making void of Biblical and theological norms. This understanding of business ethics has been criticized here because it fails in its theological task of articulating a stance which would inform one's entire calling, i.e. Christian vocation.

In addition, it is an approach to business ethics which uses religion in order to provide a personal ethic for conduct in specific problematic instances. In this sense religion is used as an index to define personal morality in professional life. Of course the decision making task is an important one, but in using the Christian faith to inform the decision, one must realize that the Christian faith informs the whole of Christian existence and not just isolated moments. It was in this sense that we felt it necessary to develop the doctrine of vocation, and the church's ministry as laity in the world in order to illustrate how a Christian businessman approaches an ethical decision from the standpoint of a faith which informs his total existence and calls him to minister wherever he is.

When Christian vocation is seen as over and against work; the church over and against the world; the sacred over and against the secular; clergy over and against the layman; and private life over and against public life, it is little wonder that business ethics is popularly treated as a separate isolated discipline over and against Christian theological ethics. It is interesting to note that whenever a period of history views work as having nothing to do with Christian vocation, that same period of history will also view the church as being separated from the world, the sacred as set off from the secular, the clergy

elevated over the layman and a private religious faith isolated from one's public professional life. Today's world reflects that pattern.

The Christian view of existence is that God created the whole world and is operative in all of it. In Jesus Christ, God is in the world reconciling it unto Him. The Incarnation took place in a fragmented world and in so doing unified the whole of existence. The Christian faith speaks to the whole of existence and calls unto it men who desire wholeness.

If God is more than a segment of reality, religion must be thought of in terms of the devotion of the whole of life. The unity the world so greatly needs, the dignity and freedom for which men are dying, can be had on no easier terms.¹

It is through the Incarnation that Christian theology is able to view work as an aspect of Christian vocation; the sacred as not in opposition to the secular; the clergy and laymen as united in Christian ministry; and private and public life unified.

The Christian businessman is a "whole" man, called in Christian vocation to minister wherever he is. When an ethical decision confronts him, he brings the totality of his existence to that moment. When a businessman is "in

¹Robert Lowry Calhoun, God and the Day's Work (New York: Association Press, 1943), p. 2.

Christ" his whole life is sanctified, including his life as a worker. What had formerly been done as sheer necessity, or perhaps out of a sense of duty, or even as a sense of self-expression and fulfillment, is now done "unto the Lord," and becomes a joyous and free service which redeems his work and contributes to the salvation of mankind.

Christ's love animates and the Christian faith informs the range and depth of the whole person. Christian man views his work as done for the glory of God, and not for man's glory and self-enhancement. This theology, of course, often comes into conflict with the prevailing attitudes in society. In the business world this theology is in conflict with the "successful" standards of high income, prestige, status and a fragmented view of man.

There is little doubt that our working situations need to be transformed into more appropriate vessels for God's will and man's response. The Christian businessman must view his work as a medium of God's Word to man, and the possibility of man's response to God. This means that the exposure of God's Word in the crucible of the business world summons all men to search for the meaning of the events in which they are engaged. This task of exposure and engagement is the unique ministry of the Christian businessman who sees his whole life as Christian vocation.

There is little doubt that the real battles of faith today are being fought in factories, shops, executive offices, farms, in political parties and government agencies, in countless homes, in press, radio and television, in the relationship of nations. The church need not worry about how to get into these spheres, for the fact is the church already is there in the person of Christian laymen.

If we believe that the Word of God is present everywhere then the laymen in the church must see that there is no forbidden work. There is no corner of human existence, however degraded or neglected, into which they may not venture. Unselfish and disinterested service to fellow-men, often without uttering one so-called "religious" word; being reconciler in the grievous conflicts that separate men and communities; questioning the world incessantly about the meaning of the events they are involved in; letting themselves be questioned by the world; these are the facets of a lay ministry which conveys reconciliation and the certainty of God's triumphant love.

It goes without saying, that this is a staggering responsibility for laymen who see their work as the arena for ministry.

...it is the laity, living and working in the world, which daily experiences the deep gulf between what the church stands for and what the world drives at...many

are bewildered at having to harbor two incompatibles in their thinking...²

It is precisely at this point that the lay ministry so often breaks down and the church fails to be supportive. And yet, it is here that all must be reminded that there is sacrifice and risk in ministry. The church must make its greatest effort in connecting the Word of God and daily work in the minds of men.

II. CASE STUDY: PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE IN MARKETING-RETAILING

It is the purpose of this case study to illustrate how Christian laymen in business might approach a difficult area in business ethics. Up to this point we have been talking in fairly broad terms, and yet the call to lay ministry always involves concrete decision making in the here and now. It is the belief of this writer that secular occupations are to be regarded not as ends in themselves but as means to the service of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, the complex area of business ethics requires articulate Christian laymen who sense the presence and relevance of God's Word in the most basic of decision making situations.

To define what are ethically problematic issues in

²Hendrick Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), pp. 113-114.

business from the vantage point of the Christian faith is one of the main concerns of this case study. Our attempt is to counter the prevailing opinion that "anything goes" when the prospect of profit hangs in the balance. The case study is an attempt, then, to single out questionable conduct in business brought about by Planned Obsolescence and in so doing sensitize Christian businessmen to the issues they must face.

The Christian in business has been able to ignore the ethical issues which his occupation often precipitates because the prevailing attitude has been that one's faith belongs to the private arena of life, whereas one's public occupational life is motivated by secular, commercial standards. This, of course, has created in any given man a "split-level" or double-standard ethic which only serves to fragment man. Christian theology calls for a "whole" approach to life where one's faith and values inform every arena of existence. We have shown that daily work is intricately associated with one's calling in Christian vocation; therefore occupational life is one of the many stages on which God's will is being worked out. The Christian businessman, if he views his work as we have described, must face the inherent ethical problems which emerge in his occupation. This case study intends to show what the issues are that arise from Planned Obsolescence.

In addition, this case study will be a living example of the opportunities for lay ministry in the world. The Christian businessman must keep in mind that he brings to these ethical issues not just his public professional life, but his entire existence. He encounters the issues in view of the fact that he has a unique ministry to perform and that God's Word is operative through vessels such as himself to the men with whom he works.

The primary goal of this case study is not then to give constructive answers to the issues which emerge, though in several instances suggestions will be given. As we know, every situation varies and therefore, so do the solutions. Besides, even if answers could be given, to do so would be to deny the businessman the decision making task which every moral encounter demands. Our task in this case study, then, is to draw from the area of marketing-retailing ethically problematic issues that Christian businessmen must acknowledge and encounter. In so doing we will illustrate the unique opportunities the Christian businessman has for ministry in the complex world of marketing-retailing. In short, there is a needed ministry in marketing-retailing which Christian businessmen could perform; planned obsolescence illustrates the dilemma.

Marketing-Retailing Defined

The term marketing-retailing has been used to describe the occupational focus of this case study. Because marketing-retailing implies many things to many people it would be well to define this writer's usage of the term.

The role of marketing in our economy is to move goods and the title to them from manufacturers to consumers. This in the United States is a gigantic undertaking in that it involves the movement of manufactured goods which have an annual value of over \$399 billion.³ To accomplish the task, millions of people are required as salesmen, advertisers, retailers, wholesalers, warehousemen, product planners, market speculators, and others too numerous to mention.

Marketing...includes all the activities necessary to place tangible goods in the hands of household consumers and industrial users, excluding such activities as involve a significant change in the forms of the goods.⁴

Retailing is one function of the total marketing process. Retailing is the point at which the title to the goods is transferred to the consumer and therefore is the

³Bureau of the Census, United States Department of Commerce, Statistical Abstract of the United States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 786.

⁴Delbert J. Duncan and Charles F. Phillips, Marketing Principles and Methods (Homewood, Ill.: Irwin, 1964), p. 4.

last step in the marketing process. Therefore, the retailer can be thought of as the middleman between the manufacturer and the consumer.

The retailing function involves added costs (ranging from 10-12% increases in groceries to close to 50% increases in furniture, appliances and other hard lines). However, the retailing function has an essential role to play in the marketing process and this role involves additional costs. The services of retailing can be broadly classified as providing: place, time, possession and ownership, and form.⁵

A well known axiom in the retailing field pretty well sums up the retailer's function. The retailer is to have the right merchandise at the right place at the right price in the right quantity at the right time.

Retailing involves tremendous risks and these risks affect the profit or loss of any given retailer. The retailer's role in the total marketing process is absolutely essential and indeed deserves the additional expense the consumer must pay. The retailer as the middleman provides the needed services which enable the product to reach the consumer's hands with a minimum amount of effort on the part

⁵Fred M. Jones, Retail Merchandising (Homewood, Ill.: Irwin, 1957), p. 8.

of the consumer. To put it precisely, without the retailer, the consumer's effort to secure goods would be frantic, time consuming and costly.

Often Christians as well as non-Christians find the field of marketing-retailing and other business professions undesirable as potential occupations.

Many ministers and intellectuals place business on a lower pedestal than the work of doctors, teachers, lawyers, or even factory workers, when they are ranking activities as fitting for Christians.⁶

At the same time, college students have indicated in bull sessions and private conversations that a business career is a second-rate choice for Christians. Troubled individuals have sensed what learned investigators have concluded concerning the "American Business Creed". "The creed bows to the importance of religion, admits seeking religious guidance, but continues to be a predominantly secular ideology."⁷

The results of a survey by Morris Rosenberg are quite revealing as to why business ranks so low as a prospective occupation. Rosenberg found that students selecting business careers were more money-minded, had less faith

⁶Harold L. Johnson, The Christian As A Businessman (New York: Association Press, 1964), p. 19.

⁷Francis X. Sutton, The American Business Creed (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 269.

in people, were less interested in helping others, were more security minded, and were less concerned with self-fulfillment than students selecting careers in teaching, science, medicine or engineering.⁸

Business is often criticized for its production of goods and services with only self interest and monetary incentives in mind; for its prodding people, via sales promotion and advertising, into a buying spirit when consumer abundance and corporation profit are already at all time highs. Frequently businessmen are criticized for being too narrow-minded, too corporate-minded, too profit-minded. Of course this is not descriptive of all businessmen, but the nature of corporation life often dictates this as a style of life.

At the same time, some of the most important decisions which affect not only scores of people but also contemporary values are being made by those men in corporations who have, so to speak, "reached the top".

There is little doubt that some of the most difficult decisions to be made in any occupation are to be encountered in business. Some of the problems include conflict of interests, manipulation by sales promotion and

⁸Morris Rosenberg, Occupations and Values (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957), p. 74.

advertising, corporation needs versus human needs, pressure of profit motive, pressure of competition, pressure from various markets and many more. It is this writer's conviction that many of the moral dilemmas businessmen face are interrelated and to treat them separately would be undesirable. There are several focal points from which the specific dilemmas could be observed, but this writer has found it helpful to use the problem of planned obsolescence as an appropriate catalyst. As will be observed, the problem of planned obsolescence includes the whole spectrum of moral dilemmas which face most businessmen, and marketing-retailers especially.

Benjamin Selekman of the Harvard Business School has probably come as close as anyone to describing the businessman's predicament when he portrayed the many faced character of business as in conflict between the, "...ethical ought versus the technical must."⁹ Businessmen who take this conflict seriously cannot help but be confronted with moral dilemmas, difficulties which would overwhelm any citizen. It is when this conflict has not been taken seriously, when the technical must over-rides all other considerations, that many legitimate criticisms are leveled at business. It is such statements as the follow-

⁹Benjamin Selekman, A Moral Philosophy of Management (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), pp. 103-105.

ing which lead to serious questioning on the part of many as to the values held by contemporary businessmen:

If what is offered can be sold at a profit (not even necessarily a long term profit) then it is legitimate. The spiritual, social and moral consequences of his (businessman's) actions are none of his occupational concern.¹⁰

The Problem: Planned Obsolescence

In a free enterprise economy like ours, business ingenuity is essential to remain competitive. Because of increasing consumer abundance in the United States, ingenuity in business is essential if one expects to seek new avenues to market goods for a profit. This competitive spirit which is inherent in our economy forces manufacturers and retailers to produce and sell goods of higher quality at better prices. Often, as can be seen, the consumer is the recipient of the improvements the competitive situation engenders. However, to balance this positive side one must point out that today the average American citizen is consuming twice as much in the way of goods as the average citizen's consumption in the years preceding World War II. In fact, it has been said that nearly two-fifths of all the things today's citizen owns are not essential to his physical well being.

¹⁰Theodore Levitt, "Are Advertising and Marketing Corrupting Society?", Advertising Age (October 6, 1958).

This fact leads one to conclude that today we are indeed living an abundant and prosperous life in the United States. However, this optimism is somewhat deceptive for at the same time that our abundance is at its highest level comes the announcement from sources in industry that if we want this level to be maintained, and if we do not wish to see our economy sickened, the average citizen will have to step up his buying by nearly 50% in the next dozen years.¹¹ In other words, in order to keep our automated factories producing, to keep our labor force employed, to keep our wholesalers, retailers, advertisers and everyone else involved in a manufacturing economy stable, we must increase the purchases of our already over abundant society. This has led one marketing consultant to proclaim,

...our enormously productive economy...demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfactions in consumption...We need things consumed, burned, worn out, replaced, and discarded at an ever increasing rate.¹²

This same consultant reported in another article that retailers have an obligation, "...to push more goods across the counters."¹³ This pressure leads businesses to

¹¹Vance Packard, The Waste Makers (New York: McKay, 1960), p. 11.

¹²Victor Lebow, "Editorial," The Journal of Retailing (Spring 1955), p. 7.

¹³Victor Lebow, "Editorial," The Journal of Retailing (Winter 1955-1956), p. 166.

realize that (at our present high consumption level) if most families already own your product, then you are forced to choose among three alternatives if you wish to remain competitive and profitable; you can sell replacements, you can sell more than one item to each family, or you can dream up a new or improved product. This predicament led Vance Packard to muse,

...How much should we rejoice when General Electric introduces a toaster with nine buttons, which make it possible to obtain a piece of toast in any of nine shades? How much should we rejoice when another company introduces a mechanical martini-stirring spoon, which relieves the person from the labor of twisting his wrist?¹⁴

This need to seek new markets of potential customers also has its expression in businesses which promote buying of more than one item.

The ultimate of the more-then-one-kind concept is the promotion of two houses for every family; one for the city and one for the country vacation. Not only were home builders involved in this promotion, but also manufacturers of building supplies, appliance manufacturers, and many more indirectly related industries that provide home accessories. This promotion has very lucrative possibilities in that the two house family would be likely to have three or four bathrooms, two or three television sets, two fully

¹⁴Packard, op. cit., p. 13.

equiped kitchens, possibly four to twelve beds, multiples of furniture, linens, rugs, china, etc.

This competitive situation of seeking new markets for potential sales that has evolved in our abundant twentieth century lives has both positive and negative implications. It is the conscientious businessman who must weigh the conflicting factors which this situation presents.

On the positive side, there is no doubt that much which has evolved as a result of the competitive situation has been of benefit to the consumer. Undoubtedly, the consumer demands many new innovations and is willing to consider those which are brought to his attention. Our economy is a healthier one because of it, the quality of goods has improved, the price has decreased on many items, and all along the way our standard of living reaches new heights.

On the negative side of the ledger is the issue of manipulating consumer resources to the whims of business profit motives. Here we encounter the major concern of this case study, the nature of planned obsolescence as a tool in creating new markets and new avenues to increase profits.

The use of planned obsolescence as a marketing tool means many things to many people. On the positive side many would claim that obsolescence provokes a healthy

dissatisfaction with doing things less well than they can be done. As far as its effect on the economy, many view obsolescence as a necessary contribution to a healthy and growing society. This argument goes something like this: good products are made, people are induced to buy them and the next year a new product is deliberately introduced that will make the previously purchased product appear old fashioned, or out of date, or obsolete. To the proponents of this side of the argument, obsolescence is not organized waste, rather it is a sound contribution to the American economy. There can be no doubt that our present day economy is significantly oriented to obsolescence. On the negative side, however, there are statements like the following one.

We are inundating ourselves with junk. Science devises junk; industry mass produces it; business peddles it; advertising conditions our reflexes to reach for the big red box of it.¹⁵

Vance Packard, in his book The Waste Makers, designates three ways in which products can become obsolete.

Obsolescence of function. In this situation an existing product becomes outmoded when a product is introduced that performs the function better.

Obsolescence of quality. Here, when it is planned, a product breaks down or wears out at a given time, usually not too distant.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 63.

Obsolescence of desirability. In this situation a product that is still sound in terms of quality or performance becomes "worn out" in our minds because a styling or other change makes it seem less desirable.¹⁶

Let us now discuss each of these categories as to their function within the broader concept of planned obsolescence.

Functional Obsolescence. The functional type of obsolescence is certainly desirable when planned. Modern society would not be what it is if it were not for the tremendous gains made in technological improvements. The new advances made in airplanes certainly can be applauded. The technological inventions of television, direct-distance dialing, new and improved industrial machinery all contribute to the present day style of life we all lead.

Let us grant at this point that functional obsolescence is a positive step forward and that we as a society should be in favor of any new and genuinely improved product. Undoubtedly this type of obsolescence is not nearly so controversial as the other two types; quality and desirability.

Quality Obsolescence. Probably to a lesser degree, though just as significant as to function, the quality of many merchandised goods have increased due to our competi-

¹⁶Ibid., p. 55.

tive economy. Notable to this observer, for example, are the tremendous gains made recently in the durability of men's socks. Seldom is darning required since the new synthetics have been introduced into the sock's composition. I for one am not very deft with a needle and thread so I truly appreciate this quality innovation.

Nevertheless, in recent times there has been the expressed concern that built-in obsolescence combined with a growing disregard for maintaining quality levels is becoming increasingly prevalent. The lowering of quality levels could stem from many situations. Often people want something for a low cost and in turn receive a low quality item. Shoddiness might also be due to haste caused by the strain of bringing out a new model every year. It may also be caused by skimping on the product itself in order to feed advertising and sales costs. All of these forms of shoddiness, whether legitimate or illegitimate, aid in producing obsolescence in the product, and obsolescence puts the owner into the market for a replacement.

Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman, proclaims that,

...once in my life I would like to own something outright before it's broken! I'm always in a race with the junkyard! I just finished paying for the car and it's on its last legs. The refrigerator consumes belts like a goddam maniac. They time those things. They

time them so when you finally paid for them, they're used up. 17

Businessmen over the years have developed a variety of phrases to describe that moment when their product will, or is likely to, collapse. They speak of the "point of required utility", of "time to failure", or "product death date". Establishing the probable lifetime of a product by its manufacturer is not very difficult. It is often done by determining the life span of its weakest link. The life of a product tends to be as long as that link, especially if that link is difficult to replace.

Of course even the best of products eventually wears out. A company cannot be legitimately criticized for estimating the death-date of its product, for it is going to wear out under normal usage anyway.

It would seem, however, that a company is vulnerable to criticism if it sells a product with a short life expectancy when it knows that for the same cost, or a little more, it could give the customer a product with a much longer useful life, or when it advertises the durability and long lasting features of the inferior product. In such situations one certainly must call into question the motives of both the manufacturer who produces the product and the

¹⁷Arthur Miller, Death of a Salesman (New York: Viking Press, 1949), p. 73.

retailer who advertises, promotes and sells the product.

To emphasize durability, many feel, is out of date and should be stopped for it is not meeting the needs of the times. Some conclude that United States' marketers face the task of selling the public away from the deep-rooted idea that it has about durability. It could be done either by soft-pedaling durability or by deliberately promoting the idea of "non-durability". In any case, a trend away from durability has set in and will proceed with gathering momentum.¹⁸

An article which speaks out in favor of quality obsolescence from the standpoint of industry was written by Martin Mayer. In an article entitled "Planned Obsolescence: Rx For Tired Markets?", he noted that one of the discouraging facts in a manufacturer's life is that the more durable the item, the more time it will take to consume it. He suggested that manufacturers could make some headway against the dilemma by making the older product seem obsolete.

The trick is not foolproof, but it ought to work a good part of the time--and perhaps can even be planned, assuring the manufacturer of a large, steadily increasing replacement market...It is clear that a pattern of

¹⁸Leon Kelley, "If Merchandise Does Not Wear Out Faster, Factories Will Be Idle, People Unemployed," Printer's Ink (January 9, 1963).

successful style obsolescence must eventually be reinforced by a decrease in the durability of the product.¹⁹

It is clear then, that quality obsolescence has sanction from some important men in the business industry. At the same time, quality obsolescence is not always universally accepted by the industry although it is widely used.

Obsolescence by Desirability. This form of obsolescence most directly affects the marketing-retailing section of business for the use of sales promotion and advertising, both marketing-retailing functions, are primary factors in bringing about obsolescence by desirability. This form of obsolescence is dependent on style, and where as quality obsolescence was based on durability and physical wear, desirability obsolescence allows a product to wear out in the owner's mind. While the product still functions dutifully, it becomes stripped of its desirability.

Of course everybody gets tired of some products, especially clothing and other fashion items where a heavy emphasis is placed on style. Change then is often a very legitimate desire on the part of the consumer and often has nothing to do with business' use of desirability obsolescence. Often, however, merchants and manufacturers realize

¹⁹Martin Mayer, "Planned Obsolescence: Is For Tired Markets?", Dun's Review, LXXIII:2 (February 1959), 40-41.

that they can announce ahead of the consumer's normal desires for change, the need to become updated style wise. This then is a conscious desire to make older products obsolete because they lack current style.

Ideally, it would be most satisfying to create this obsolescence in the mind by bringing out a substantially better functioning product at the same time. But in modern marketing, there is very little that is new that can be offered.

The manufacturer can't wait for the slow workings of functional obsolescence to produce something really better...so he sets out to offer something new anyhow, and hopes that the public will equate newness with betterness.²⁰

Of course the challenge in using this form of obsolescence as a strategy is to persuade the public that style is an important element in the desirability of one's product. Sometimes this form of obsolescence is labeled "psychological" obsolescence.

A product's style can be changed in many ways. One of the most typical changes is in color. As we know, there can be only so many colors. Therefore what often results is the need to change the name of a color. When this writer was in New York a few years back, men's wear reintroduced yellow into its "new line" of fashions. Only this

²⁰Packard, op. cit., p. 69.

time yellow was renamed "banana" and was hailed as the newest and latest in men's clothing. Purple often becomes burgundy or wine. With each new fashion cycle old colors are reintroduced with new names, and sometimes in a different hue. Also the manufacturer can change the shape, the profile or the width, as when he moves the hemline up or down and widens and narrows the width of men's ties.

There is no doubt that the most innovating changes in style take place in the fashion industry. Designers in a great many fields earnestly study the obsolescence-creating techniques that are pioneered in the field of clothing and accessories, particularly those for women. "Women's clothing by 1960, had become a twelve billion dollar industry, much of it created by obsolescence planning."²¹

B. Earl Puckett, chairman of Allied Stores, in a speech given to my retailing class at New York University said,

Basic utility cannot be the foundation of a prosperous apparel industry...We must accelerate obsolescence...It is our job to make women unhappy with what they have... We must make them so unhappy that their husbands can find no happiness or peace in their excessive savings.

Alfred Daniels, merchandising executive of Abraham and Straus, has said that anything new is good as long as it is in fair taste. The trick to making this adventure

²¹Ibid., p. 71.

profitable is to "...get a lot of fashion cycles working... Today the fashion cycle moves so quickly it is a blur."²²

Even men's wear has begun to change styles more rapidly. The promoters of style for men have far to go to match the style change of every three months which exists in the women's fashion field, but they have succeeded in achieving a major change for men about once a year. It used to take four or five years to see a major change.

Quite possibly the recent mood of American people has had a great deal to do with the promotion of forced desirability obsolescence in a variety of fields. Vance Packard has suggested that this form of obsolescence,

...is a symptom of our times related to the prevalence of boredom, lack of self-expression, absence of free and truly friendly communication between neighbors and friends, and a general lack of values.²³

It must be emphasized once again that not all obsolescence is planned. There are so many factors which effect our economy that no one manufacturer or retailer could predict a product's usefulness. The concern of this study, however, is where obsolescence is premeditated or planned.

²²Alfred Daniels, "Anything New," Harvard Business Review, XXIX: 3 (1951), 52.

²³Packard, op. cit., p. 76.

Planned Obsolescence and Ethically Problematic Issues

For men involved in marketing, i.e. sales promotion, advertising, and selling, the goods they promote are often produced with planned obsolescence as the motivating factor. There is no doubt that serious ethical dilemmas emerge in light of planned obsolescence and its related ills. Let us now discuss some of the issues.

When product design is so closely tied to sales, as is the case in both obsolescence by quality and desirability, rather than tied to maximized product function, and when marketing strategy is based on frequent style changes, certain ethical concerns emerge. This situation, as described, almost inevitably results in a tendency to use inferior materials, short-cuts in the time necessary for sound product development, and a complete neglect of quality. The over all effect of such built-in obsolescence is a hidden price increase to the consumer in the form of shorter product life or utility. That the marketing-retailing sector of business is held partly accountable is clear, for several of the functions of retailing, i.e. sales promotion, display and advertising, must become geared to the theme of abundant prosperity if they are to sell what obsolescent-minded manufacturers are producing..

With production at an all time high, and with no slacking off in sight, one must consider the problem of

dwindling national resources. There can be no doubt about it; our continent is being stripped of its material resources at an ever increasing rate. There has been so much wealth as a result of these resources that American's naturally assume that there will always be more where it came from. Adding to this present situation is the additional strain which comes when marketers persuade citizens to increase their consumption; the strain becomes compounded. That this is a moral issue and one that must be faced, is clear.

In the area of advertising and selling, huge amounts are being spent and more and more people are employed, just to get consumers to consume more. Some men in the marketing industry have suggested if there are not at least a million more well trained salesmen by 1970, then the expanded economy predicted for that year will be stifled by overproduction.²⁴

The cost of advertising reached \$25 billion in 1965. And one study has shown that on television alone, "...programs heard in the average home by one or more members in a day carried nearly an hour of commercials."²⁵

These new pressures in American life are causing more people to find their main satisfaction in their con-

²⁴Ibid., p. 229.

²⁵Ibid., p. 216.

sumption role rather than their productive role. These pressures are bringing forward such traits as pleasure-mindedness, self indulgence, materialism, and often passivity as conspicuous elements of the American character. Closely related to this is a hedonism which is established on a standard of changability, instead of the desire to purchase something that has an element of permanence.

Some producers of goods are still struggling to produce the very highest quality product possible; and are succeeding. Many others, however, feel they can build a greater over all volume if their goods do not last too long. Still others are striving for quality, but often feel they do not dare to because their corner-cutting competitors might push them to the wall by using the savings to throw more money into promotional display and advertising that would catch the public's attention.

In short, perhaps these issues point out one important factor, that it is not our capabilities that are inadequate; rather it is our priorities, our values. "The nation faces the hazard of developing a healthy economy, within the confines of a psychologically sick and psychologically impoverished society."²⁶

²⁶Ibid., p. 316.

It is certain that Christians in business must be concerned with the character of American society to which they contribute. Whether all businessmen will assume that responsibility is up to conjecture. Nevertheless, there is varying opinion in business circles concerning the use of planned obsolescence to create new markets.

A hopeful sign, though not totally optimistic, is indicated in the results of a survey taken by Harvard Business Review in 1959. In this survey several thousand executives were asked how they felt about planned obsolescence. More than three thousand men responded. The editors of the review concluded from the responses that the subject was very touchy. The survey disclosed a vast amount of uneasiness about the techniques being used today to move goods. In fact, by a ratio of two to one, the majority of American business executives feel that for the long-run benefit of the United States, too large a part of our present economy is based on superficial product obsolescence. One third of the executives agreed that their own companies were making periodic model or style changes. Many were disturbed by even being asked to comment on planned obsolescence. They seemed to feel that obsolescence was such a fundamental part of our economy that it should not be tampered with. The editors concluded that there is a general concern and interest in looking for and

considering alternative means for maintaining consumer expenditures. Uneasy feelings had evidently still not pushed the executives to the point where they were certain they would be willing to stop using such techniques if that meant they had to be satisfied with a lower level of sales.²⁷

Probably the most disturbing statement on the subject has been made by Dr. Theodore Levitt, an economic consultant, to whose speech we have already referred.

In Dr. Levitt's speech he felt it was quite possible for many businessmen to conclude that they were contributing to decadence, self-indulgence, materialism, cynicism, irresponsibility, and selfishness. He cited questions being raised by the prospects of achieving ever higher consumption. Dr. Levitt conceded that conceivably marketers could eventually become successful in "loading people up with redundant goods, creating superficial and vulgar wants, and generating the kind of opulence that turns luxuries into necessities" and that perhaps "...we will get soft and decadent and finally drift down into a quagmire of decay that was Rome's fate." But he quickly added that we should not go overboard in an orgy of moral

²⁷"Survey", Harvard Business Review (September-October 1959), 14-28, 168-176.

self-flagellation. "A lot of this viewing with alarm is an irrational Puritan reaction against the good life...It is not at all a settled matter that luxury creates softness and decadence..." He urged marketers not to get all excited about the human consequences of so-called successful marketing. Instead, he argued that the marketer should tend to his knitting. Society needs always to be asking itself where it is headed. And someone must think and act on the questions being raised by the prospect of ever-higher consumption; but that someone should not be the businessman, he feels. He concluded that, "...cultural, spiritual, social and moral consequences of his actions are none of his occupational concern. In truth," he said, "...the businessman exists for only one purpose, to create and deliver value satisfaction at a profit to himself." He suggested that businessmen leave the soul saving, preserving spiritual values, cultivating human dignity, and conserving self-respect to others.²⁸

It is perhaps a hopeful note that subsequent issues of Advertising Age carried pages filled with angry denunciations and rebuttals by marketers and other readers. Nevertheless, Dr. Levitt represents a significant portion of contemporary businessmen and economists. Dr. Levitt's

²⁸Levitt, op. cit.

position poses several questions which need to be answered. Is business to be maintained at that narrow minded a level? Is there a place for men who maintain moral and material responsibility in today's business world? Can a Christian choose business as a form of work in Christian vocation, and if so what posture must he assume in that career?

Theology of Vocation and the Church In the Light of
Business Ethics

The Old and New Testament emphasis that vocation is defined more by the intention of the worker than by the work itself enables us, with justification, to consider any occupation, including business, as an arena of work in which one can pursue his calling. The person in business who considers all of life as the arena of Christian vocation, must, in fact, see his daily commerce as a partial exercise of his service and witness to God's presence in the world. Such a man, therefore, cannot be blind to the dangers, evils and challenges which regularly beset him in the crucible of business. This is especially so in the case of the businessman who operates within some of the questionable areas of planned obsolescence.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer sees the calling of Jesus Christ as a call to belong to Him wholly; it demands accomplish-

ment in one's field, yet never as a value in itself, but in responsibility toward Jesus Christ. Christian vocation, then, is a total response of the whole man to the whole of life, and to choose narrowness of interest either professionally or socially is to be irresponsible.²⁹

To determine the responsible act is the burden of Christian ministry in business. Bonhoeffer went so far as to say,

It is entirely in line...if we say that in a certain concrete instance the answer to the call of Jesus Christ may even consist in leaving a particular earthly calling in which one can no longer live responsibly.³⁰

One's job might be changed, therefore, if the act of responsibility can no longer be faithfully observed. Hopefully this action would be taken only after every existing avenue of reconciliation has been explored.

The basic ethical conflict faced by all Christian laymen in business, especially those businesses characterized by planned obsolescence, is the tension which must exist between God's Word and commercial idolatry. The economic factors which necessitate planned obsolescence often force businessmen, via sales promotion and advertising, into making goods and profits the gods of modern life.

²⁹Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ethics (New York: Macmillian, 1962), p. 256.

³⁰Ibid.

This kind of idolatry is in direct conflict with God's Word. There can be little doubt that commerce necessitates, to a degree, self-interest, profit seeking, drive for higher sales and higher salaries and that these values and motivations are not in basic harmony with a ministry which emphasizes Christ's love and service to one's fellow human beings. It would seem that the Christian layman caught in such a dilemma, not even totally clear himself as to where his values lie, has a unique ministry to perform in such circumstances. All businessmen, including the Christian businessman, need to be warned over and over again against putting the business firm and its values, free private enterprise, products of the company, and their own careers at the very center of their lives. This form of idolatry stands in direct opposition to God's Word. The Christian businessman is in a unique situation to make that message known, by both word and deed.

The role of profit in business is perhaps one of the most crucial dilemmas facing ethically minded Christian laymen. The businessman who sees his occupation as a facet of his Christian vocation can deal with the dilemmas of a profit motivated economy and still remain dedicated to the prior claim of his faith.

Problem of Profit. Profit need not be the sole

motivating force in our business economy, though it is an important one. Many confuse the role of profit in today's economy and feel that as a problem it is unresolvable.

There are basically two opposite positions in regards to profit. One point of view centers around a criticism of profit, suggesting that there is something immoral about business activity and even greater immorality attached to the gaining of profits. The other point of view assumes that profits are necessary in a free enterprise society and therefore, morality or ethics play no part in the economic system which is profit-motivated. As one accounting professor has maintained,

...the ultimate purpose of business activity, indeed, its only economic justification, is to use resources effeciently to produce goods and services to satisfy the wants of free consumers.³¹

Profit according to this approach is a necessary scale by which we measure performance. There are two reasons why this scale is valid.

First of all profits are a reward for uncertainty and innovation. Businessmen must take the risk that their goods and services might never be sold. In order to assume this risk there must be accompanying it the prospect of

³¹Earl A. Spiller, "Profits and Ethics, Colleagues or Adversaries?" in Joseph W. Towle (ed.) Ethics and Standards in American Business (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964), p. 51.

profit.³²

Secondly, profit is the reward for efficient management. In a competitive economy it is certain that some firms will do better than their competitors and those firms which use their resources more economically will gain greater profits. In a sense, those firms making profits are to be praised, for they are using the resources of society most efficiently.³³

Profit is a,

...measuring stick of how successful a firm has been in innovating and in operating efficiently. Profits, therefore, are not really an end in themselves, but rather represent a tangible measure of an intangible end--that of efficiency in the use of resources.³⁴

In other words, a Christian businessman can be ethical in the sense of fair dealing, maintaining honesty, integrity, self-discipline and responsibility, and still operate his firm at a profit.

The general conflict between Christian vocation and profits arises when profit per se becomes the ultimate goal of business activity without consideration for the proper economic justification of profit. Such activities as stealing secrets from a competitor, price rigging or conspiracy, ambiguous or misleading advertisements, hidden defects in an inferior product, bribing purchasing agents;

³²Ibid., p. 52.

³³Ibid., p. 53.

³⁴Ibid., p. 54.

all potential activities when planned obsolescence prevails, are to be classified as unethical conduct. And yet, as we have seen, these actions have been justified on the basis that they are necessary in a free enterprise economy because they contribute to the production of profits. In our view of profits, however, while these means may contribute to profits, particularly in the short-run, they are not profit justified. The basic error is in making profits the ultimate goal of business activity. False and misleading actions do not contribute to the real ultimate end of business activity, that of using resources efficiently to produce goods and services to satisfy the wants of free consumers.

We could say in summary then, that in regard to profit's role in competition, competition for the sole purpose of destroying one's rival is not economically justified nor ethically justified, regardless of how great a contribution it might make to a particular firm's profit. On the other hand, competition to do better than one's rival in using economic resources efficiently to satisfy the wants of consumers is the ultimate task of business and is entirely justified.

Businessman as Professional. We have emphasized throughout this paper that the Christian view of man is

a whole view. The Christian layman who ministers through his work in business views his job as but one aspect of his whole existence. His job does not become the center of his existence, though indeed it might occupy the majority of his waking hours. Because he sees work in this dimension, he is better able to transcend daily commerce and from this vantage point see the effects of his labor and decide whether or not he is serving God and his neighbor through his occupation. I believe the secular term "professionalism" is a close parallel to the Christian view of work and while the Christian businessman is not out to convert his fellow workers, it does seem appropriate that his witness could at least call for a more "professional" approach to business.

Many of the dilemmas that face modern marketing and retailing executives that were described earlier could be overcome if business could regard itself as a professional group, where men seek to serve others instead of serving an impersonal profit machine. If the businessman could make the adjustment to regarding his job as a professional occupation, his eyes then would be more on the activity he is performing, than on the reward he is receiving.

Commitment and responsibility are thus a mark of the professions rather than the businesses, and if business is to be made a profession, it needs to devise methods whereby emphasis upon the activity, commitment, and

responsibility become the common property of membership of the business community.³⁵

The Christian layman who works amidst conflicting demands in business must see the problem of business ethics as a conflict not only involving Christian morality, but also, in secular terms, as the conflict between the professional demand for responsible service and an exclusively economical demand for profit.

Conclusion

It has been the thesis of this paper that the Christian in business can not turn his back on the ethical issues which emerge in his occupation, but that he must, as a part of the church's ministry to the world, point out the existence of the issues and in the company of his fellow workers, bring God's Word to bear on the effects of their labor.

The two main issues which emerged in our study of planned obsolescence were (1) the idolatry of seeing earthly material possessions as the central goal of human existence; and (2) the projection by marketing-retailing, via powerful promotional media, of values which instill in society the desire to pursue a consumptive role rather than a productive role.

³⁵Albert William Levi, "Ethical Confusion and the Business Community," in Ibid., p. 25.

The Christian businessman is in a unique position to deal with these issues, and as a minister to the world, can engage his associates in a search for the meaning in their labor. No matter how independent and self-contained a particular task may seem, other persons are directly affected by what one does. A Christian businessman's actions are so co-ordinated with the actions of fellow workers, of employers, and consumers, of dependents and friends, that what he does as a workman becomes a part of an individual pattern which affects the breadth of his relationships with all of society. Therefore, the Christian at work confronts an inescapable imperative that is grounded neither in his own preferences nor in the particular dictates of his cultural community, but in the demands of his faith. The divine summons comes to men in the demand for responsible behavior on the job. These demands are neither arbitrary nor escapable.

Our study of planned obsolescence has shown that in the field of marketing-retailing there are problematic issues which the Christian businessman cannot ignore. The divine imperative is to confront these issues, and in so doing to effectively carry out one's Christian vocation in work. To reveal God's Word in the crucible of daily commerce is risky business, especially when that Word frequently stands in direct opposition to the prevailing norms of

society. This ministry, however, is inescapable for one who sees "work" as a segment of his Christian vocation. A Christian's view of business ethics has theological substance only when that understanding is made clear.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The task we set out to do, that of theologically integrating one's Christian vocation and ministry in the world with the specific problem of business ethics, has now been completed. However, the practical implications and consequences of this study now begin to emerge.

In this brief concluding chapter two major implications will be discussed. In the first section a strategy for the church "gathered" in its ministry to the businessman will be discussed. In the second section, some concluding statements will be drawn concerning rather broad and diversified implications of this study.

The Church and the Christian Businessman

A strategy for ministering to businessmen and other occupational groups is greatly needed inside the church. If the clergy are to equip the laity for their ministry in the world of daily commerce, then some serious steps need to be taken to make known and clarify the theological justification and imperatives which motivate Christian witness in all of life. Any given church, depending on its location and composition will have to decide what the strategy should be. There are, however, several key undertakings which should be seriously considered by all churches which sense

the need for better equipped laymen in the world.

First of all, the clergyman should seriously analyze his own theology of Christian witness. In doing so he probably will discover that all along he has seen himself as the minister in his congregation.

Every minister should contemplate the emphasis of his preaching. Has it judgmentally attacked contemporary business from the safe confines of the pulpit, without, at the same time, offering sympathetic hearing to the complexity of business dilemmas? Most contemporary clergymen would have to admit that they have been guilty.

Every congregation should form groups which have as their primary focus the common problems faced by all men in occupational life. In these kinds of groups, the clergy and the laity can discuss the concepts of "Christian vocation", "priesthood of all believers", etc., and relate the church's total ministry to the work they perform daily. The problem of business ethics cannot help but emerge in such a climate.

These groups could meet for lunch, early morning breakfasts, evening meetings, at retreats, etc. The goal, of course, is to bridge the tremendous chasm we have spoken of throughout this research; the gap between private faith and public professional life. Only when we have bridged this gap, will the sense of a unified Christian ministry,

i.e. laity and clergy, return to Christian thought.

Ecumenical fellowships organized around occupational groups could be the form taken in larger cities and metropolitan areas. That this field has been largely unexplored is clear.

The clergyman in any given church could do a great deal more in the area of consciously relating the Christian faith to the daily activities of men. To do this, the minister could organize Bible study groups around occupational tasks. These groups would include housewives, students, senior citizens, etc. The focus of these study groups would be to bring the message of the Bible to bear on the common problems of day to day existence. In doing this the minister would gain considerable insight into his congregation and at the same time bring to his sermon preparation the dilemmas and conflicts faced by all men in the secular world.

These study groups could eventually evolve into discussion groups "on the job". Sensitive laymen could organize these groups and in so doing minister to the needs of all men.

Broad Implications

The focus of this paper has been primarily on the occupational group of business, although the concepts

developed could be applied to any form of occupational life. It has been our primary goal to speak to those men whose jobs are in the "professional-executive" group. Therefore we have not spoken at all about industrial man, or the "blue collar" worker.

Because the "professional-executive" group has been our focus, there are several implications which emerge from this study which apply to him. Two of these issues are his suburban identity and the increasing frequency of his leisure time.

Suburban Identity. Basically, the professional-executive group are suburbanites. Not only is their public occupational life separated mentally from their private religious life, but in addition, it is separated geographically. The church's ministry in suburbia has often been as frustrating, if not more, than its ministry to the inner-city. The reason for this is that suburbia is often the image of escape from public involvement and responsibility for many.

Winter has said that suburbia is symptomatic of a ...mass amnesia--a widespread and morbid forgetfulness by which men and women shut out the world of human reality and even the deeper aspects of their own experience.¹

¹Gibson Winter, The New Creation as Metropolis (New York: Macmillan, 1963), pp. 136-137.

Suburbia, to a very large degree, has created a wall against social differences. There is a sameness in suburbia which seemingly denies the richness of complex human reality. "The attempt to erase social differences empties life of its depth and meaning."²

So often in suburbia the hope of fulfillment degenerates into public irresponsibility. Little or no contact is desired with the dispossessed, the down-trodden, and the diseased. The suburban dream of fulfillment, says Winter, is the "...illusion that we can possess the future, control it, limit its membership and finally take our ease within it."³

This caricature of suburbia is gaining in popularity. No longer is happiness to be found "out there", many are saying. More and more the church is hearing from the racial militants that the real battle the "white" church faces is not taking place in the downtown ghettos, but in the "ghetto's of indifference" out in suburbia where the church already is. Suburbia is the place where the "cutting edge" exists. It is interesting that we have had to be told that!

²Ibid., p. 137.

³Ibid., p. 143.

If the church in suburbia is to minister to this "community" then it must be made aware that it is dealing with the best example of fragmented contemporary man. He is most often a man who does not have an integrated view of Christian existence. He eats, sleeps, plays and worships privately. He politics, works, "worships" with Rotary, and socializes with clients publicly. The two seldom have any significant effect on each other.

The church's ministry to the professional-executive suburbanite must center around a concept of Christian existence that integrates the whole man so that bridges are built between the opposites in his fractured life. The doctrine of Christian vocation and the church's ministry to the world informed by the Incarnation and the Word of God as developed in this study opts for a total, responsible view toward human existence. The church as it senses its unique ministry in suburbia will have to face with increasing urgency the task of developing a theological base by which suburbanites realize the "sinfulness" of their narrow view of existence. The solutions to the problems of the inner-city will be seriously curtailed until suburbia makes all of mankind the focus of its responsibility and concern.

Leisure Time. In addition to the problem of the "professional-executive's" suburban identity is the related dilemma of increased leisure time. With the prospect of increased leisure time looming on the horizon, contemporaries are baffled by what men will do with all their "free time". The problem of using leisure time is very much related to our whole discussion of Christian vocation.

The popular view of leisure time is that it is time off the job which has been earned by hard, diligent labor. It is "free time" and in that sense one can use it however he wishes. The predominant view is that it is used to have a good time but increasingly this pursuit of pleasure in the long run ends in boredom and emptiness.

Historically the church has held in suspect the concept of "leisure time" on the grounds that "...it is a luxury, caters to sensual enjoyment of man, and leads to an immoral use of time."⁴ Increasingly, however, the church must take a fresh look at leisure time for it is unquestionable that nonworking hours are increasing and that the leisure side of life provides man with untapped creative possibilities.

The present view of leisure time, both inside and

⁴Robert Lee, Religion and Leisure in America (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), p. 169.

outside the church, contributes to a fragmented view of human existence in that it most often divorces leisure from the rest of life. "...we are free in leisure, unfree in work; leisure is unobligated time, the rest (work, family, sleep, eating, et cetera) is obligated."⁵ With this view of leisure in mind it is little wonder that men view their "free time" as the desirable side of life because it carries no obligations and calls for limited responsibilities; all the rest of time is to be simply endured. This fragmented view of human experience runs directly counter to the wholeistic view of man's life called for in the doctrine of Christian vocation discussed in this thesis.

Theologically speaking, leisure time when viewed as free time with no obligations and responsibilities is directly opposed to the Christian view of the "fullness of time". The Christian faith does not view time as fragmented, but sees the wholeness of time, thereby placing no premium on particular blocks of time as being more or less obligating. "With the entry of God into human life in Jesus Christ, man's time has been hallowed forever---it is good."⁶ Therefore, all time is a gift, our leisure hours as well as our working hours. Neither work nor leisure are to be simply endured or wasted, but both are to be the

⁵Ibid., p. 171.

⁶Ibid., p. 228.

arena of man's action, reflection, giving and receiving.

For the Christian businessman, whose entire life is the acting out of Christian vocation, leisure time offers an opportunity for him to be engaged in activities that call for the same degree of honesty, responsibility and obligation that his work calls for. Only by acting in this manner does a Christian businessman play out his Christian vocation and exert the freedom that is his in the "fullness of time".

No matter how much leisure time increases in the coming years, it will have to be integrated with the rest of life if it is to be creative and meaningful. The whole issue being raised here is one of stewardship. Christian stewardship calls for a responsible use of time, talents and possessions. For the Christian businessman who is often the possessor of power and influence in his community, Christian vocation calls him to responsible stewardship in the use of his position. Instead of complete detachment, leisure time should lead him into deeper involvement and commitment, calling for responsible decision making in the wholeness of life.

The church should begin its ministry to businessmen by dealing with the dilemmas of occupational man and in so doing reveal the call to Christian vocation as a response to the totality of human existence, including one's

suburban life, his urban professional life, his leisure time, his talents and possessions. The cleavage which persists between job and leisure, urban and suburban life, work and faith, are but symptomatic of all the gaps which exist in contemporary fragmented man. A theology of Christian vocation which has at its heart the universality of God's Word and the reconciling love of the Incarnation is not only an approach to business ethics, but is also the theology which informs our entire Christian existence and in that sense frees us from the bondage of narrowness.

Conclusion

Our contemporary world has lost the simplicity of previous eras due to a rising pluralism. There was a time when America was perceived as a "Christian nation" in which the Christian church participated as lawgiver and judge. This role of the church has been eroded by an increasing pluralization. This change in the church's stance in the church-world relationship has helped to produce our modern emphasis on the strategic importance of the laity. The church has found that it must operate within and not over against the world and it is the laymen who are in the world, involved in its work and responsible for the decisions that make the world more or less human. The Christian layman is in a strategic position to minister in the name of the church because it is he, and not the ordained minister,

who has worldly credentials.

The Christian layman's worldly credentials are his job, but the failure to see his occupation as an aspect of Christian vocation has led to a fragmented view of his existence, and therefore a failure to perceive his occupation as a means of ministry in the world.

The major concern of this thesis has been to address that problem and as a result has had a two pronged emphasis: (1) work is a genuine aspect of Christian vocation; and (2) Christian man should be evangel in his vocation. Only when these two themes are integrated into a view of Christian existence can the whole matter of business ethics be approached theologically and responsibly.

We saw that biblically, man's existence and therefore work is an essential vessel through and in which existence is redeemed. This, of course, calls the Christian layman to see his job not as a secular pursuit isolated from his Christian faith, but to the contrary, an essential facet of his vocation as a Christian.

The Christian businessman is a "whole man", called in Christian vocation to minister wherever he is. Christ's love animates him and the Christian faith and heritage informs the range and depth of his entire existence. The Christian layman-businessman views his work as a medium of God's Word to man, and the possibility of man's response

to God. In this sense his work is evangelistic. This means that he exposes God's Word in the crucible of the business world and in so doing summons all men to search for the meaning and wholeness which they desire in the events they are engaged in. This task of exposure and engagement is the unique ministry the Christian layman performs in his work, if he perceives his occupation as an aspect of his Christian vocation.

The future of the church and its mission in the world is intricately tied to the Christian layman's view of his employment and life in a secular age. If he fails to see his work and life as a means of witnessing the reconciling love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ, then the church will have lost sight of its inherent uniqueness and call. The church in order to be responsible to its Biblical, historical and theological heritage, and effective in a world drastically in need of wholeness and reconciliation, must make its greatest effort in connecting the Word of God and daily work in the minds and hearts of contemporary men.

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